THE BRITISH ARMY

1783-1802

By the Same Author.

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The British Army

1783-1802

FOUR LECTURES
DELIVERED AT THE STAFF COLLEGE
AND CAVALRY SCHOOL

BY

THE HON. J. W. FORTESCUE

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PREFACE

THE four lectures comprised within this volume have been printed at the request of some of the officers or the Staff College and Cavalry School, to whom they were delivered in November 1904. Though, from the nature of the subject, there is some repetition in the third and fourth lectures of matter brought forward in the two first, I have decided to print the whole of them as they stand. There may well be young officers who would find the lectures addressed to so critical an audience as the Staff College somewhat heavy, and yet be willing to accept a few fragments of them mingled with the information which appeals more directly to their interest.

The chapter on "St. Lucia, 1778," appeared many years ago in *Macmillan's Magazine*, and is thought worthy of republication, not for any merit of its own, but because it treats with fulness of an episode which, though little known, is for many reasons one of the most interesting in our military history. The paper on "Transport and Supply" is reprinted, with some additions, from an article which appeared in the *United Service Magazine* at the end of 1902. I should have been content to leave it for dead had not an officer, whose opinion I respect, assured me that it possessed a certain value for purposes of instruction. I sincerely wish that its value were greater, but the history of

Transport and Supply is of all military subjects the most difficult and obscure. My acknowledgments are due to my friends, the Editors of the two magazines above named, for permission to republish these articles; nor must I fail to express my gratitude to Colonel Sir Henry Rawlinson, Colonel Julian Byng, and the officers of the Staff College and Cavalry School for the encouragement given to my work by their interest in the history of the Army.

J. W. F.

January 1905.

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(*Staff College, November* 19, 1904)

I

GENTLEMEN—Our subject is the history of the Army from 1783 to 1802—that is to say, from the Peace of Paris, which ended the war of the American Revolution, to the Peace of Amiens, which closed the first phase of the war of the French Revolution. The limits of the period may seem to you less arbitrary when I remind you that, practically, they cover the term of the younger Pitt's first administration. In the present lecture, therefore, I shall endeavour to show you what manner of Army Pitt took over at his accession to power in 1784. In a second lecture I hope to give you some idea of the manner in which he employed it for war. But, before I enter upon my subject, I must warn you that it is impossible for me to portray to you what the Army was in 1784, or at any given date, without a historical retrospect describing how it came to be what it was. It is only as a student of history that I can presume to address you; and one of the chief functions of history is to show us how things came to be as they are. But I must warn you that I shall confine myself to bald statements only, though they shall be as accurate as my care can make them, leaving it to you to draw from them your own conclusions. For I do not think it right for a civilian to dogmatise to soldiers as to the value of military facts.

As you are aware, every civilised community requires an armed force for two principal purposes—for the maintenance of law and order, and for defence

against external enemies, or, in other words, for purposes of police and for purposes of war. I shall not trouble you with the primitive arrangements which formerly provided for the police of this kingdom. The truth is that, except during one very short period of the Protectorate, there was no distinct police force of the slightest efficiency in these islands, until Peel began the creation of the present constabulary in 1829. Our existing police are, in fact, a standing army, and such a standing army as would have been permitted to no English Sovereign in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pray, bear in mind this fact of the absence of police in the eighteenth century, for it is most important.

I turn now to the armed men of the nation for war. The national force was, of course, the Militia: theoretically, the manhood of the country. The command of the Militia was vested in the Sovereign, having been first torn from him in the Great Civil War, and then yielded back at the Restoration. It was organised, of course, by shires, and its control vested in the King's Lieutenant, now called the Lord-Lieutenant. The Lords-Lieutenant received their orders from the Secretary of State, and, when Secretaries of State became multiplied, from the Secretary for Domestic Affairs, or, in two words, the Home Office. Beware of thinking that the Militia had much to do with the War Office in the eighteenth century, for it had little or nothing. For the rest, I can dismiss the Militia for the present by saying that, until reorganised in 1757, it was a thoroughly inefficient force.

I pass now to another branch of national defence—the garrisons of the royal fortresses and castles. From the first introduction of cannon, it may be said that these consisted in time of peace chiefly of artillerymen. They were a permanent force, and really constituted our first Standing Army. It is true that in 1745 many of the so-called gunners were found to be civilians; for the politicians, in their rapacity of

patronage, seized even these petty appointments for their dependents. Nevertheless, these garrisons formed a nucleus of trained artillerymen, who were subject to the control, not of the War Office, nor of the Home Office, but of the Board of Ordnance.

What, then, was the force for the active operations of war? The answer is that troops were hastily improvised as soon as war was declared, and as hastily disbanded immediately upon the conclusion of peace. And how and upon what principle were these troops raised? Upon the model (at any rate from Queen Elizabeth's time) of the mediæval companies of soldier-adventurers, who organised themselves for hire by such potentates as were at war with their neighbours. The old word companies, construed in an extremely modern sense, exactly describes them, for their basis was essentially commercial. A man, or a group of men, came forward with the necessary capital for the raising, training, arming, and equipping of a body of soldiers for some certain or uncertain venture—agreeing among themselves as to the sharing of the profits. The case was exactly analogous to that of fitting out a privateer or a pirate. Since a rich man could, generally speaking, more easily procure the necessary men and equipment, it followed that the largest shareholders tended to become the senior officers. But the shareholders had often the wit to select, not necessarily the richest, but the ablest man for supreme command, just as at present a managing director is chosen rather for his ability than for the amount of his stake in a business. For the basis of the whole was, as I have said, commercial; and the principal object was to make profits.

What were those profits? That depended much upon the leading shareholders. A company might sign a contract to enter the service of one potentate; and, having taken as much money as it could extract from him, turn to the rival potentate and make terms with him. Such blackmail was common enough in

mediæval days—so common that it drove potentates to raise troops among their own subjects. But the true source of profit was that which sends privateers to sea—prize of war, including not only plunder actually taken, but also ransom for property spared and for prisoners restored. Such prize-money might be private as well as corporate, whether gained by the individual through exceptional luck in the sack of a city, or through exceptional bravery in the capture of some prisoner of high rank. Thus, a fine opening existed for a lad of spirit and intelligence who had no capital but his sword; and many a young fellow, who had got into trouble by some foolish freak, went straight to the wars as a volunteer, just as nowadays he would go to America or the Colonies. George Monk would never have been Colonel of the Coldstream and Duke of Albemarle if he had not broken the head of a sheriff's officer as a lad of sixteen in North Devon. But all corporate prize was divided on a fixed scale, according to the rank of every man, from the private to the commander. Thus, skill claimed its share as well as pecuniary outlay; and it will be readily understood that in this way each grade of military rank possessed a pecuniary value, and could change hands like the shares in a joint-stock company.

The next step was that potentates began to hire their own subjects instead of foreigners. At first, the largest unit raised was the company of infantry; but very soon the regiment took the place of the company, and there was evolved the following system, under which practically all our existing regiments came into being. The Sovereign gave a letter of service to some leader of repute among his own subjects, authorising him to raise a given number of men within a certain time. He also agreed to give him a fixed sum for every man so raised, and a regular rate of pay for so long as the corps should be continued. This fixed sum was originally known as "coat and conduct money," meaning the money

needed to provide the recruit with a uniform coat, and to pay the expenses of conducting him to the rendezvous. By the seventeenth century this sum had taken its modern name of levy-money; for the business of the coat was passed to other hands.

The leader then chose such subordinates as he could trust, to raise each a quota of men—each captain, in fact, to raise his company. The captains in turn could find others to assist them in finding men, in the hope, or upon the agreement, that these should receive commissions as subalterns. For it was understood that a leader who raised a regiment should enjoy the privilege of recommending, which was practically the same as nominating, his own officers. Thus, under the new arrangement, the Sovereign advanced the capital for the enlisting of soldiers, and the selected leader and his nominees supplied the trouble of raising and training them. But, apart from the fact that patriotic men would often raise regiments without levy-money, it by no means followed that the capital thus advanced was sufficient. If many letters of service were issued at the same time, the price of recruits naturally rose, and officers were obliged to put their hands deeply into their own pockets. A strong demand for any article always produces a middleman; and the crimp is the most rapacious and unscrupulous of middlemen. There was sometimes as furious gambling in the recruiting market as in the money market.

The leader having reported his regiment complete within the time agreed upon, the King sent his muster-masters and inspectors to see that the numbers were correct and the men of the right stamp—a duty which was often most dishonestly performed. Thereupon the regiment received its arms and equipment from the Board of Ordnance, while its clothing was provided in part by the colonel, as presently to be described, and in part paid for, together with his necessaries, out of the levy-money. The regiment was then at once taken into pay, and generally hurried straight to the

front. For a country which enters upon war unprepared, as our own invariably does and has done, always tries to make up for lost time by sending hundreds of men in driblets instead of thousands in a mass. Thereby, however, the corps at once entered into the field of its real profits—prize-money. Even in the wars of King William and Marlborough a regular tariff was arranged between the opposing armies for the exchange of prisoners not only against prisoners of equal standing, but against stipulated sums of money. The Sovereign also, as the capitalist who, in modern phrase, had financed the Army, reserved to himself a share of all prize of war, though he frequently made it over to the troops. Much of the fury of Marlborough's soldiers, when their great leader was taken from them, was due to the fact that they were baulked of their expected reward. They had been obliged to deal leniently with the Austrian Netherlands as a friendly country, and they looked forward to large prize-money and plunder in France.

What, then, was the meaning and intent of pay? The question is a very curious one, and is worth examination. In 1346, the year of Crécy, the pay of an archer was threepence a day, for which he was expected to supply himself with everything—food, clothing, equipment, arms, ammunition. The value of that sum to-day, at a very moderate estimate, would be three shillings. By 1415, the year of Agincourt, the threepence had risen to sixpence; though it can hardly be supposed that the value of money had halved itself within seventy years. In Henry the Eighth's time the foot-soldier mutinied for an increase of twopence, and in 1557 he gained his eightpence. In that same year an ensign's pay was one shilling, or only half as much again as a private's. In 1689 the pay of a private was still eightpence, while that of an ensign had been more than tripled to three shillings and eightpence. Beyond all question, the eightpence was worth less in 1689 than in 1557; so that the soldier's pay may be

said to have fallen steadily from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries. More remarkable still is it to note that in 1789 the foot-soldier's pay was still eightpence, the same as in 1557, and only one-third greater than in 1415. The only difference was that the soldier no longer furnished, as in 1557, his own arms and ammunition. How are we to account for these extraordinary figures? I believe the explanation to lie in the transition from a semi-national and semi-feudal force, such as fought at Crécy and at Agincourt, and even at St. Quentin in 1557, to the mercenary force which still constitutes our standing Army. And the secret of the change is that mercenary corps were framed upon the presumption that their pay would be supplemented by prize-money. They were constituted as though they had been private ventures, dependent upon their own profits. But since it was hopeless to expect officers to invest their money in commissions when a long peace might bring them no dividend, a certain sum was paid to them annually as interest, and was called pay.

Thus, then, we arrive at the true nature of the pay of the Army. To the officers it signified interest upon the capital that they had sunk in their commissions. To the men it was, at its best, a pittance of food, clothing, and equipment; at its worst, a fund for the support, either by customary right or customary abuse, of the administrative departments of the regiment and the Army. It was in the nature of a retaining fee against the day of prize-money; less a wage for service done than a fund to enable the service to be performed; rather the tools of a trade than the profits of a trade.

A glance at the stoppages of a soldier's pay will make this clearer. I pass over the days when the eightpence was supposed to pay the foot-soldier for hire of his arms and for ammunition, though there are signs that even in William the Third's time men were sometimes expected to find their own ammunition. First, then, 25 per cent was stopped for the soldier's clothing; that is to say, for his coat, waistcoat,

breeches, and gaiters, of which the breeches alone were renewed annually. This stoppage was paid to the colonel, who supplied the clothing; and it was understood to be deducted as much for the colonel's benefit as the soldier's. In plain words, the soldier was forced to contribute to the emolument of his commanding officer. Next, 5 per cent was deducted from the pay of all ranks, and kept by the Paymaster-General; so that men and officers alike contributed to the expenses of part of the Administrative Service. Fees were also exacted, legitimately or illegitimately, by sundry officials through whose hands the pay-sheets passed before the money was produced from the Treasury. This made another contribution to the National Administrative Service. Nor must you be surprised at this. Officials were mostly paid by fees in those days; and the regular payment of salaries is an extremely recent innovation. Finally, one day's pay per annum was taken for Chelsea Hospital, which we may call insurance; and one day's pay for the colonel's agent, or, in other words, for the expenses of regimental administration. Out of the balance remaining from these stoppages the soldier was required to provide himself with daily food, and to renew his boots, underclothing, gaiters, necessaries—in a word, the whole outfit supplied originally from the levy-money. Similarly, a dragoon's pay was required to cover the expense of his forage and the wages of the farrier and riding-master. Moreover, it must be added that a subtraction was made for pay of a surgeon on service.

I need not say that, with all these minute deductions, it is impossible to calculate what proportion of the soldier's pay was spent directly upon him. I take it, however, as a foregone conclusion, that he saw not a penny of it in coin, and not a great deal of it in food or drink. The amount nominally due to him, even in 1783, for subsistence was sixpence a day; but his captain was required by law to pay him three shillings, not three and sixpence, for every seven days, and to account

for the odd sixpence a week once in every two months. Be it remembered, also, that the discharge of the pay itself was very irregular; that long arrears were rather the rule than the exception, especially in time of war; and that the bills or tallies in which those arrears were finally defrayed were subject to discount, sometimes at a ruinous rate. I think that I need say no more in proof of my statement that the pay of the soldier never pretended to be a fair wage, but was only a retaining fee against the day of prize-money. The natural consequence was that in peace at all times, and in war at all but the most favourable times, desertion attained to almost incredible proportions.

Two small matters remain still to be considered. Regiments, as I have said, were raised only for the temporary purpose of war. Upon disbandment there arose the claims of officers who had sunk capital in the forming of them, and of men who from wounds or other physical causes were incapable of earning their bread. The case of the officers was met by the institution of half-pay, which formed a reserve for the filling up of vacant commissions in the next war. It was frequently specified in the letter of service whether the officers should or should not be entitled to half-pay. The case of the men was met by royal bounty or private charity. Bloody Mary was the first Sovereign to show compassion upon old soldiers. Elizabeth, on the other hand, would have nothing to do with the miserable creatures, as she called them. Her favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, had a better heart than his Queen. I do not know if any of you are familiar with the Leicester Hospital at Warwick, where, ever since 1587 (I think), twelve old soldiers of the counties of Warwick and Gloucester have found a comfortable home for their old age. But if ever you find yourselves at Warwick or Leamington with an hour to spare, you cannot do better than visit that beautiful old building. Nearly a century later were founded the Royal Hospitals of Chelsea and Kilmainham,

which did for three kingdoms what Leicester had done for two counties. A Chelsea pension, however, did not exempt a man from further service; and on the outbreak of war the pensioners were constantly formed into companies of invalids for garrison duty. The poor old men were sometimes even forced on board ship, as for Anson's voyage round the world, or bribed to take service with the East India Company. Widows and orphans were long left to the charity of officers, who in Marlborough's wars supported a regular fund for their relief.

And now, gentlemen, consider how our Standing Army came into existence. It was formed by the negative process of omission to disband, from time to time, certain corps which had been created, on such conditions as I have described, for the definite purpose of war. This meant that an organisation designed for war only was suddenly forced to meet the needs, conditions, and purposes of peace. How, you will ask, did the Army get on? The answer is that it did not get on. The mercenary bands in which officers had invested their money did indeed remain, so long as Parliament would vote money to maintain them; but they remained, as they had always been, private ventures and private property, absolutely independent of each other and practically autonomous. The regiment was completely self-contained; the colonel was proprietor and king, and the officers joint-proprietors and sub-kings. It does not appear that a full colonel long enjoyed, even if he ever possessed, the right to sell his regiment; for the Crown early asserted its claim to confer the colonelcies of the regiments upon such officers as it pleased. But with 25 per cent of the men's pay made over to him for clothing, and with the legitimate right to gain as large profits as he could from the transaction, the colonel's vested interest was very strong. That of the rest of the officers, who had purchased their commissions, was almost unassailable. The Sovereign tried repeatedly to enforce rules and

regulations for giving some uniformity to the regiments and reducing them to the semblance of an army, but in vain. If officers chose not to obey, there was practically no penalty. They had purchased their commissions, and had a right to do as they would with their own. To cashier them was not only to drive them from the service, but to sequestrate their purchase-money, which was a punishment too severe for ordinary offences. Regimental life in time of peace is hardly conceivable by us now. The men were enlisted for life, and, since every recruit was an expense, officers were well content, partly no doubt from compassion, to keep old soldiers of sixty, seventy, and eighty years of age. If recruits were needed, it was for the captain to provide them for his troop or company out of a mysterious fund, which might or might not leave him some private profit. Hence all officers disliked enlistment for short terms, which was resorted to first during Marlborough's wars and frequently afterwards, because it subjected them to expense which they could not afford to bear. Remark how much independence was enjoyed by captains. There is no such thing as a regimental muster-roll in the Army until 1782, all rolls previous to that date being made out in troops and companies. Then it must be remembered that there were practically no barracks in England in those days; for, though they were early introduced into Ireland, the British politician saw, or affected to see, in barracks the riveting of chains for the British nation. So the regiments were scattered in detachments in as many as eight or ten petty towns; lest the innkeepers, who by the Mutiny Act were obliged to sell the men provisions and small beer at a fixed rate (in 1783 fourpence a day), should complain of oppression. I have found it among the instructions to officers, that they should see that the men "boiled the pot every day and fed wholesome and clean"; but the object of this order was less that the men should be properly fed than that they should not spend all their money in drink. The regiments

were, from a comparatively early date, inspected; but, for reasons presently to be explained, inspecting officers were not very exacting. A colonel therefore could do very much as he pleased; and in 1783 it was still open to him to drill his men according to the system of Frederick the Great, or according to the practice of Marlborough, or, as seems to have been more common, according to some whimsical ideas of his own. But it must be noted that before the middle of the eighteenth century colonels had become rather figure-heads than actual commanders of regiments. They pocketed the emoluments and occasionally interfered with the management, but they left the actual work to lieutenant-colonels. Moreover, the politicians eagerly seized upon colonelcies as rewards for political service, and appropriated them to their own ends. The administrative work was not serious; for the agent, who had originally been the colonel's financial clerk, gradually took over the whole of the financial business and became as important as his employer. There were many instances of colonels of regiments continuing in their command when insane or childish through age; and then much power fell into the hands of the agents. In former days Messrs. Cox did not enjoy their present monopoly; and there were occasionally frightful complications when an agent, through his mismanagement or rascality, became insolvent. In such cases a regiment had to extricate itself from its difficulties by assigning ensigncies to its creditors, or by other financial devices which at this distance of time are far too subtle to be unravelled. But it had to face those difficulties by itself, for the matter concerned no one else; and the Treasury was the very last quarter from which help could be expected.

This complete independence and autonomy of regiments was the distinguishing feature of the Army in the eighteenth century; and its inconveniences in the field were incalculable. To give but one instance, Wellington could only obtain fresh clothing for his

army in the Peninsula by telling his commanding officers to write to the regimental agents. And yet, through generation after generation, no stone was left unturned to foster this regimental independence. Every concession, gradually and grudgingly made to the crying needs of officers and men for expenses of administration, of remounts, of widows, was doled out in the shape of pay for fictitious men—so many to a company for a captain, so many to the regiment for the colonel. You may read on muster-roll after muster-roll the names of John Doe, Richard Doe, and Peter Squib, signifying really contributions to the stock-purses and non-effective funds which are the distraction of modern students of military finance. Everything was done regimentally, and accounted for regimentally; and too often, to use the strong phrase of an Adjutant-General, according to the "damned whims of individuals." The friction, waste of power, and inefficiency which followed as a natural consequence were beyond description.

Looking now, as far as possible, upon the Army as a whole, let us glance for a moment at the status of general officers. We are accustomed to attribute to the Sovereign the most important power of giving promotion; and, indeed, the Sovereign possessed that power. But it was promotion in the Army, and not in the regiment; and, setting aside the small establishments for the governors and staff of fortresses and castles, there were no pay-sheets in the Army except regimental pay-sheets. In other words, a general officer, no matter what his rank, received no pay as such in time of peace. All that he could receive was a governorship or the colonelcy of a regiment. In time of war the generals in the field had a special establishment voted for themselves and staff; but in time of peace they were often glad to earn regimental pay by doing regimental duty as captains. A curious instance of the injustice and inconvenience of this system is to be found in the history of the West Indian campaign of 1795. The commander-in-chief of the forces to

windward died at Martinique (nearly every one died in the West Indies in those days), and the command devolved upon a certain Major-General Irving. At the first blush, this might seem to you a piece of good luck for him, but it was not so. "My pay is inadequate to my situation," he wrote. "My predecessor found it so, and he had £3 a day, a government [of a fortress] worth £1000 a year, and a regiment [that is to say, a colonelcy] worth the same. I have only the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Seventeenth Foot, and yet I am obliged to keep a constant table of sixteen to thirty covers. I am already, after one month, over £1000 in debt." Officers of the Brigade of Guards are probably familiar with the strange phenomenon of general officers going on guard with their companies. The classic instance is that of a Major-General Grinfield, regimentally a captain and lieutenant-colonel, who was suddenly assailed by his creditors when going on guard at the Tylt. With great promptitude he surrounded the sheriff's officers, and, in spite of their frantic protestations, put the whole body of them into the guardroom. The scene must have been inexpressibly ludicrous, but it proved to be no laughing matter for Grinfield. For the Lord Chief-Justice of the King's Bench swept down upon him in his wrath, brandishing the unlimited powers which all judges still possess in matters of contempt of court; and poor Grinfield was glad to escape very severe punishment by ignominious submission. You will now understand how extremely limited the authority of generals over colonels, and indeed over any officer, must have been. Unless the generals were themselves colonels of regiments, they were of no account; and, if they were, they naturally sympathised with the failings, shortcomings, and frailties of their brethren.

Turning next to the Head-quarters of the Army, it may be guessed that, where every unit was so independent, no very large staff was required. At first a Commander-in-Chief sufficed almost of himself, with

a secretary who held a commission binding him to obey the Commander-in-Chief according to the discipline of war. This functionary was called the Secretary at War, and at first was no more than his commission described him to be. The first of our Secretaries at War was killed in action at sea; and King William's Secretary at War always accompanied him to Flanders for every campaign. Very soon, however, this official grew to be the representative of Parliamentary control over the Army; and, in the long intervals when there was no Commander-in-Chief, he was practically supreme. Being, however, not a Secretary of State, he disclaimed all constitutional responsibility for anything; and hence his office was a paradise of jobbery. He had no very large staff of clerks, for the regimental agents practically did most of the work of accountance; and he would have been swept away long before he was, had not Parliament saddled him with some real financial responsibility in 1783. As to the Military Staff, I find little trace of any influence given to them until 1760, and indeed their powers were too small to make their work very heavy. The Quartermaster-General might arrange for regiments to shift quarters, but a corporal's guard could not march from London to Windsor, even till the Crimean War and later, without a route from the Secretary at War. In fact, the Head-quarter Staff was wanted only to ensure that colonels did not make false musters; for the inspection of clothing, and indeed all difficult points of discipline or administration, were made over to a Board of General Officers. The most lucrative office was that of Paymaster-General, which came into existence by an accident. Charles the Second had not money to pay his troops, so engaged one of his subjects to supply the pay as a speculation. Part of the consideration made over to this contractor was the 5 per cent already mentioned as deducted from the pay of all ranks. And this iniquitous stoppage was continued long after the Paymaster-General had become

the banker of the Army, and successive holders of the office had made enormous fortunes. We may now dismiss the War Office, treating it as the department responsible for the *personnel* of the cavalry and infantry.

The *matériel* for the whole Army lay of course in the hands of the Board of Ordnance, which was efficiently reorganised by James the Second before his accession. But the scope of the Ordnance extended beyond the needs of the Army; for it was called upon to supply cannon, small-arms, and ammunition to forces and fortifications all over the Empire. The Colonies were supposed to pay for these stores, and sometimes did so; but the Crown was exceedingly liberal in making them over as a free gift. It seems to have been a rule in the British dominions that if people would erect fortifications for themselves—as, for instance, the inhabitants of a seaside town for defence against privateers—the Crown would lend an engineer and provide guns. On the other hand, the Crown disclaimed responsibility for the fortification of other than royal ports, dockyards, and arsenals. If people would help themselves, the Crown would help them, and not otherwise. I think it right to mention this, for the question still comes occasionally before the public.

But, besides the *matériel*, the Board of Ordnance enjoyed also exclusive control of the *personnel* of the Artillery and Engineers. Hence, as you know, these corps were for long known as the Ordnance Corps. The Board of Ordnance had its own Paymaster-General; and the distinction between the Ordnance Corps and the rest of the Army was accentuated by the fact that they were not regulated by the purchase system, and not clothed by their colonels. In fact, the artillery and engineers were so far isolated from the cavalry and infantry that during the American War there was much controversy whether a major-general, whose regimental service had been entirely with the artillery, was entitled to command a detachment of all three arms. Fortunately—for he was an extremely able

officer—the decision from Head-quarters was given in his favour. But the conflict of jurisdictions was not always so easily ended. Thus the governors of the royal fortresses were generals appointed by the King, and subject to the Commander-in-Chief. Their artillerymen and engineers were appointed by and subject to the Board of Ordnance. At the Naval arsenals also the various Naval authorities claimed a share in the plans for defence. Hence, when in 1779, at a moment of deadly peril, General Grey was sent down to take measures for the security of Plymouth, he found that the responsibility for the defence of the place was divided between the Commander-in-Chief, the Ordnance Board, the Admiralty Board, the Navy Board, and the Victualling Board. To these five authorities must be added the Home Office, for most of the garrison was composed of Militia. As a natural result, the place was defenceless. Like a wise man, Grey wasted no time in wrangling, but wrote to the country gentlemen all round, begging them to send in their estate-workmen. They did so, and by their means Plymouth was placed in a state of defence.

I come now to the non-combatant branches of the Army—transport, supply, and finance. At the end of the seventeenth century these duties, as I shall presently show you, were distributed among a multitude of boards, but were before long transferred one and all to the Treasury. The entire service of transport was done by contract; and therefore it was a matter (as was conceived) wholly for the financial branch. As to supply, since the men were required to pay for their food, it was necessary that the value of any supplies furnished to them should be deducted from their pay. This therefore also became a matter for the financial branch. As to medical service, the surgeon was a regimental functionary of very ill-defined position. He could purchase his post, or at any rate he frequently did; but I have found instances of a surgeon being taken from the ranks. Medical stores, so far as I have

been able to gather, were generally furnished by Apothecaries' Hall until 1747, when George the Second granted to a certain individual and his heirs a perpetual monopoly of the supply of medicines for the Army.

Here therefore we have at least three distinct departments concerned with the *personnel* of the armed forces, namely, the War Office, Ordnance, and Home Office; to which I must add that the Brigade of Guards was not subject to the Commander-in-Chief, but under the direct orders of the Sovereign. We have also *matériel* of war in the hands of the Ordnance; transport and supply in the hands of the Treasury; and medical stores committed to a monopolist. But I am afraid, gentlemen, that I must trespass further on your patience by duplicating most of these multitudinous departments. Until the Union of England and Scotland in 1707, there was a separate military establishment for each of the three kingdoms; and from 1707 until the Union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1800, there was a British establishment and an Irish establishment. I shall not trouble you with the Scotch establishment, but the Irish is a more serious matter. And here let me warn you, in case any of you should make research into our military history in the eighteenth century, to beware of accepting the establishment of men shown in the Army Estimates as the total force of the British Army. First turn to the Ordnance estimates and add in the Artillery and Engineers; and then do not forget to add also the Irish establishment. Many historians, even of wide knowledge and great ability, have gone wrong upon this little point. The numbers of the Irish establishment in peace, unlike those of the British, were fixed and permanent—12,000 men from 1692 to 1769, and 15,000 men from 1769 till the Union.

Though composed of regiments of the British Army, this Irish establishment was practically a distinct force. It had its own Sovereign (the Lord-Lieutenant), its own Commander-in-Chief, its own War Office, its own Paymaster-General, its own Board of Ordnance, and its

own Artillery, distinct from the British. Worse than this, it had till 1769 its own strength, which was absurdly weak, for all regiments; and, still worse, its own rates of pay. For Ireland, though the fact is now forgotten, was once the victualling-yard of the world, and therefore provisions were cheap. Thus the transfer of a regiment or even of an individual from the English to the Irish establishment involved the adjustment of differences of pay, causing trouble and confusion that is appalling to contemplate. Meanwhile, note one very important fact which distinguished both Scotland and Ireland from England until the war of the French Revolution. Neither the one nor the other had, except in theory, any militia of its own, or other organisation for home defence. With this final complication I may, I think, close my rough sketch of the order, or rather chaos, which governed our military system in our chosen year 1783.

Your comment no doubt will be, What a hopeless organisation for war! True, but let us pause and reflect for a moment upon the purposes for which our Standing Army was created during the reign of King Charles the Second. His Queen brought him for dowry Tangier, which required a garrison—we may call it a Mediterranean garrison. Three regiments—the Second Queen's, Fourth King's Own, and Royal Dragoons—were accordingly raised for Tangier. She also brought with her Bombay, which meant an East Indian garrison; and a few companies, which have long since vanished, were raised to hold Bombay. The King also inherited several colonies on the Atlantic coast of America, which were increased in the course of his reign by the founding of several more settlements and by the conquest of the Dutch colony of New York. These colonies were all supposed to defend themselves, having very full rights of self-government and a militia after the English model; but New York, being the frontier state towards the most powerful of the Indians and the dreaded French in Canada, required the protection first

of two, then of four regular companies. Here, then, was an Imperial garrison in the temperate zone. But Charles the Second inherited also certain West Indian islands, including several of the Windward chain that run from Grenada to the Virgin Islands, and the very rich and valuable possession of Jamaica, a thousand miles to leeward. These also were supposed to defend themselves by their militia, which, since the progeny of the white man does not thrive in the tropics, was supposed to be filled by white servants—almost a synonym for white slaves—imported from England. But the island of St. Kitts was, until the Peace of Utrecht, shared by the French and English; and, since the French kept a garrison there, it was necessary to keep two English companies to face them. Here, therefore, was an Imperial garrison in the tropics. In fact, the Standing Army was confronted from the very first moment of its existence by the same complex duties that tax its strength to-day. But remember that all these garrisons over sea were at first and for a long time tied permanently and indissolubly to their stations. They were part of the Standing Army, but few were aware of their existence beyond a handful of officials at Whitehall; and even they would forget them for years together. "Out of sight, out of mind," might well have been the motto of our old Colonial garrisons.

Very different was the case with the infantry and cavalry at home, or, as we may call them, the Home Army. It was not designed primarily for defence against foreign enemies, but simply and solely for the purposes of domestic police. The First Guards, a royalist regiment, and the Blues, a relic of the Parliamentary Army, were raised, or rather continued, in order to keep order in London; and it was chiefly, I think, because the Royalist Guards proved themselves too inefficient to suppress a riot, that the Coldstream were rescued from disbandment. It so happened that as early as in 1677 the Guards were employed as Imperial police to quell a rebellion in Virginia; but this was

hardly a deviation from the ordinary duty of maintaining law and order. The Home Army was in fact a police-force. But Englishmen were then, and for some time after, at variance over the question who should sit on the throne; and this was a difference which could only be decided by force. Hence the Army was early stained by political colouring; and that was the reason why it was so bitterly hated. It was treated as the tool of a faction; and so it undoubtedly was. It was called into existence to impose the will of a minority upon the majority in the Great Civil War. It was continued in existence to uphold that same majority against the same minority under Kings Charles and James. It was transferred once more, and finally, to the minority, to uphold King William and the House of Brunswick. The period from 1688 to 1714 can only be considered as one long war; and there followed some years of unrest before the nation fairly settled down to its twenty years of peace under Walpole. But, after that, you will find in Walpole's own words plain evidence that the Army in Great Britain was no more than a police-force, hardly adequate to the duty of maintaining order, and wholly insufficient for the repulse of an invasion. One principal duty of the cavalry then, and for, I suppose, nearly a century later, was to act as a preventive service in aid of the Custom House, to suppress the smuggling which throve so amazingly under the old Imperial Commercial Code. It was impossible even to put down a powerful gang of poachers without the help of the Army.

Meanwhile the Empire had increased. Tangier indeed was gone, but Gibraltar and Minorca had taken its place, demanding a largely increased Mediterranean garrison. Bombay also had been transferred to the East India Company, which, however, adhered to the principle of permanent garrisons by raising troops of its own for service in India only. The system of white servants, again, had broken down in the West Indies; and the old local militia needed to be replaced by Imperial regiments or companies. The old system was

followed, and these corps were attached to their stations for twenty, thirty, and even sixty years together—out of sight, and out of mind. In Ireland, where the troops might almost have been termed a Colonial garrison, certain corps of cavalry likewise remained permanently glued to the soil in small detachments until their efficiency was wholly destroyed. Even in Scotland, the first Highland companies were raised simply as a local constabulary. Simultaneously, during the twenty years of Walpole's rule the presence of the Standing Army accelerated the decay of the old Militia; and the regular regiments began to be looked upon as garrisons for the fortresses at home. This was an entirely new function, not incompatible with police-duties in time of peace, but still necessitating the improvisation of troops in time of war.

And now you will ask, How were the operations conducted when war actually broke out with a Continental power, or, we may as well say outright, with France? The first step was to order an augmentation of the strength of all regiments, by an increase of the men in all companies, and often by the addition of one or two companies to each battalion. Then a multitude of Chelsea pensioners were incorporated into independent companies of invalids. Then, as a rule, a number of independent companies were raised by officers for a step of rank. Then a rush was made for the battalions that were numerically strongest and most efficient. These were generally very few: first, because many old soldiers in the ranks were unfit for service; secondly, because bad pay, hard discipline, and the enmity of the civil population towards the military drove recruits by hundreds to desertion. Usually, therefore, there was adopted the heroic measure of drafting two or three regiments into one. The regiments which were thus filled up paid so much a head to the depleted regiments for the men received; and the officers of the depleted regiments, with this money in their pockets, set to work to refill their companies. Your criticism, no doubt, will

be that regiments so composed must have lost, for a time, half the value of their old soldiers through the parting of them from their officers. But this was, comparatively, a small matter; for they were immediately broken up into small detachments to man the fleet. That was always the first function of the Army—to man the fleet—a fact which the Navy seems completely to have forgotten. The fleet always absorbed four or five battalions, and often more. For the expedition to Carthagena in 1739, six battalions of marines were nominally raised, but in reality their ranks were filled by the men of ten line battalions; while two more battalions were also taken bodily and without disguise for the fleet. You will find in Wolfe's regimental orders that he looked upon the prospect of war with France as signifying certain employment for his regiment on board ship. It should be added that until the rise of St. Vincent to flag-rank it was the exception for the soldiers thus embarked to be well treated by the Navy; and this was not the least cause of the fatal friction which too often paralysed our expeditions over sea.

The Navy having the first call upon the handful of men that was fit for service, some time was naturally consumed before a force could be collected for other operations. As a rule, a supreme military head was appointed at the Horse Guards, either just before or soon after the outbreak of a serious war, with the title either of Commander-in-Chief or of General on the Staff. But it must not be supposed that his advice was either sought or valued at Whitehall. A military expedition was directed at headquarters, not by the Commander-in-Chief aforesaid, but by the Secretary of State for the department concerned. If the seat of war was on the Continent, then the Minister in charge of Foreign Affairs was in supreme control of the operations; if it lay in or near the Colonies, then the direction fell to the Secretary who was responsible for Colonial Affairs. If operations were conducting in both theatres simultaneously, then both Ministers

directed them simultaneously. To this day the records of these wars are to be found chiefly in the archives, not of the War Office, but of the Foreign and Colonial Offices, with occasional deviations into the archives of the Admiralty and Home Office. Of course, while William the Third and Marlborough ruled England, military matters were rather more efficiently managed; and the fact that on the Continent we always fought with allies tended to subordinate the military projects of our own Ministers to those of foreign Councils of War. But a Colonial expedition was always a curious affair, even in King William's time; for that Sovereign had too much work on his hands to attend minutely to these minor enterprises. I will give you a specimen of an expedition from the year 1695; for it differs very little and in no essential point from the procedure of a century later. I would call your attention to the number of Boards concerned.

The Governor of Jamaica, annoyed and harassed by incessant attacks from the French to windward of him, entreated that an expedition might be sent to root them out of Hispaniola, or, as it is now called, Haiti or St. Domingo. At about the same time he sent home a prisoner to furnish information, and gave warning of a suspicious ship which was supposed to be making for an English port for purposes of intelligence. His letter was addressed, as was right, to the Board of Trade and Plantations, then a Committee of the Privy Council, and therefore as omnipotent as a Secretary of State. The Board of Trade sent the prisoner to the Board of Sick, Wounded, and Prisoners, and the information as to the suspicious vessel to the Board of Customs. It then submitted the main letter to the King, who approved the despatch of an expedition. The Board of Trade then required the Board of Admiralty to hire a despatch-vessel to convey the news to the Governor of Jamaica; and having written a letter to him, committed it to the Navy Board for transmission. Then it began its preparations. First,

it wrote to the War Office for two battalions of infantry; then it wrote to the Board of Ordnance for an engineer, guns, gunners, ordnance stores, and a commissary to take charge of the same; then it wrote to the Victualling Board of the Navy to supply provisions; then it wrote to the Admiralty for a squadron to escort the expedition; then it wrote to the Treasury to provide money, a military chest, and commissary to take charge of it; then it wrote to the King's physicians to appoint doctors, and finally it wrote to Apothecaries' Hall to supply medical stores. Then the trouble began. The Board of Transportation stood aghast over the price of tonnage, but at last managed with great difficulty to hire transports. The Admiralty, then and long afterwards a most jealous and imperious Board, took offence, first over the despatch of the expedition itself, and secondly because the Board of Trade had repeated to it orders already given by the King in Council; but it was obliged to obey, because it was not itself a Committee of the Privy Council and had no direct access to it. The Victualling Board raged furiously, because the unexpected call for provisions had arrived just as the Channel Fleet was coming into port to revictual. Finally, the Treasury declined to produce any money, quite possibly because it had none to produce. Meanwhile, the land-commander was appointed and asked if he had anything else to suggest. Naturally, he had many more things to suggest, for hitherto he had not been consulted; and this involved more correspondence. At last, the Board of Trade hinted that it was time for the troops to embark. "No," answered the colonels of the two regiments; "not without an advance of money. No money, no clothing; no clothing, no men." Thereupon frantic appeals were repeated to the Treasury; and, to make a long story short, the expedition at last got to sea five months behind time. The sequel is still more curious. The commodore, furiously jealous lest the general should rob him of prize-money (which, by the

King's orders, was to he shared by both services), inveigled him ashore at Madeira and tried to leave him behind. Failing in this, he approached the Treasury's commissary, who, for economy's sake, had been placed in charge both of supplies and ordnance-stores, and offered him a good share in the plunder if he would wreck the military operations. His object, of course, was that the fleet in general, and himself in particular, should have all the booty to themselves. The commissary, accordingly, refused to land supplies and stores for the Army; the military operations were duly wrecked; the commodore made a few piratical captures; and the Navy rejoiced greatly. Then down came the yellow fever and swept away commodore, commissary, and five-sixths of the force, leaving the military commander alone of the senior officers to return home and tell the tale.

It was much in this way that most of our expeditions in the eighteenth century were organised; and the natural result was that an enormous proportion of them failed. Nevertheless, our Ministers never for one moment doubted their perfect competence to plan and direct military expeditions, though the vast majority of them (and I have followed the work of a good many) were men of, at best, mediocrity. Once, after the loss of Minorca in 1756, the nation became furious with Ministers, and then an admiral was shot to appease the public. The disaster, however, raised to power the only civilian who has ever been called a great War Minister, the elder Pitt. He has, in actual fact, no claim whatever to the title, but he was a man of infectious energy, with a passion, to use the modern phrase, for colouring the map of the world red. He accomplished too, though he did not originate, the one truly great military reform which marks our history in the eighteenth century. He reorganised the Militia by instituting the ballot and the system of passing the entire manhood of the country through the ranks in terms of three years. This gave us a force for home defence, and, in time of

war, for home police. In 1745 the Young Pretender's raid had forced us to withdraw our own forces, and even foreign troops, from service in Flanders, because there was no efficient force for domestic police. Pitt therefore could use the whole of the regular Army, which he augmented by some dozens of battalions, to paint the map of the world red. He succeeded in doing so, aided by extraordinarily good fortune; but unfortunately he had never considered how the conquered territory should be garrisoned. His fervent imagination did not condescend to such details as this.

Immediately, therefore, upon the conclusion of peace in 1763, the question of Imperial defence rose up, gigantic and threatening, to demand immediate solution. The situation really called for the complete recasting of our military system; this being, in fact, invariably the price of painting the map red. Attempts were made to persuade the Colonies to contribute to the cost of Imperial defence; whereupon the Colonies answered smoothly but produced no money. The Ministers thought it best to shorten matters by levying the contributions by Act of Parliament; and, before they could realise what had happened, they found themselves plunged into a most difficult and dangerous war. As usual, no troops were ready, for recruits were more than usually unwilling to enlist at that period; but this would have been no great matter if the Ministers had but listened to their military advisers. All officers of any standing agreed that it was madness to attempt to conquer America by land; but the sage civilians knew better. They sent a force to America two years too late, and sent hundreds where they should have sent thousands; and finally the Secretary of State, a soldier cashiered for misconduct in the field, directed the operations from Downing Street. You know what the result was, and how all Europe fell upon us at the signal of the first disaster. England was never in such peril. The spirit of the English rose; and companies of Volunteers offered themselves for home defence,

which were accepted on the sound principle that they should be affiliated directly to the Militia. In Scotland the place of Militia was taken, according to a precedent of 1760, by Fencible regiments—that is to say, regular troops enlisted for home service only, and till the end of the war only. Volunteers, however, were forbidden in North Britain, because the Government would not trust the people with arms; and this caused great discontent, for the coast was much harried by French privateers. In Ireland, Volunteer corps were formed right and left, without the form of asking leave and in direct defiance of the law; and these at once turned themselves into a political organisation. Note this dangerous tendency in Volunteers, for it is a serious matter. I have seen in one of our Colonies a small but very efficient force of regular troops sacrificed, because the Volunteers, who were absolutely useless, refused to forego the pleasure of flaunting themselves about in red coats at the expense of the country. Ireland, however, was completely beyond England's control at that moment. Had we been able to prevent Irish beef and pork from reaching French ports, the French fleet could not have kept the sea, and the war might have ended differently. As things were, we were driven to make a humiliating peace.

Then, as usual, there was frantic haste to discharge every soldier as soon as possible, which was no sooner accomplished than William Pitt, hardly twenty-five years of age, acceded to power. He did splendid and most valuable work in restoring public confidence and credit by masterly financial reforms; but unfortunately he had promised himself a brilliant career as a Minister of peace. He had every right to expect great success if Heaven should send peace in his time; but no statesman has a right to say, "I will be a Minister of peace," unless he is ready for war. Pitt knew nothing whatever about war. The state of peril at Plymouth in 1779 moved him to urge fortification of the dockyards. A very strong report upon our administration at large,

quickened extensive changes in the financial branches of the Army and swept away many abuses. An important reform was effected too by transferring the expense of recruiting from the officers to the country at large. But the great evil remained untouched. The pay of the soldier, long far too low, was now so inadequate that the men were literally starving upon it. The natural consequence was that even good men deserted in despair, while recruits became positively unobtainable. The Adjutant-General and other high officers complained bitterly, but Pitt took no heed. There was no Commander-in-Chief, and therefore the Secretary at War ruled supreme, jobbing right and left, and ruining the discipline of the officers. Pitt paid £36,000 a year to the Landgrave of Hessen-Cassel so as to obtain the services of 12,000 Hessians at call, and left the British soldier to starve. The subaltern officers of cavalry were as disgracefully underpaid as the rank and file of the Army. Pitt took no heed, but left them to starve also. He reduced the establishment of the Army to the lowest possible figure, and did not care whether even that feeble force were in existence or not. He neglected the Militia in the same way, never called out more than 20,000 men, and even then did not insist that all should take their turn, but allowed substitutes to serve, and so robbed the Army of its recruits. At length, in 1792, after much pressure, he agreed to remit the 5 per cent stoppage for the Paymaster-General, and to make a few smaller concessions which rendered it just possible for the soldier to live; but he still refused to give the slightest relief to the officers. He embarked, however, without Parliamentary authority, upon a great scheme for building barracks, which would have been admirable in its audacity, if it had not been so ill-conceived and ill-executed as to waste millions for a very small result. But the nemesis that pursued him for the slighting of Parliament was as nothing to that which overtook him for his criminal neglect of both and Army Navy. Let us give the man due honour for setting in

order our distracted and chaotic finance. The service proved to be a very great one in the trying twenty years from 1793 to Waterloo. But let us not forgive him—let us never forgive to any Minister—the scandalous neglect which plunges the country unprepared into war. Common humanity, if he had not common sense, might have moved him to save unhappy men from the lash whom he had driven to desertion by refusing them bread. But he showed neither humanity nor sense. In my next lecture I hope to tell you how dearly he paid for it, and made England pay for it; how, partly as a tool, partly as a principal, he passed from blunder to blunder, defeat to defeat, disaster to disaster. It was not Austerlitz that killed Pitt. The poor man was crushed by the ever-increasing burden of his incapacity for war.

(*Staff College, November* 22, 1904)

II

GENTLEMEN—In my last lecture you may remember that I laid before you the state of the Army upon Pitt's accession to power. The Army, as I told you, consisted of a congeries of independent and autonomous regiments of cavalry and infantry, subject, in the default of a Commander-in-Chief, to the Secretary at War, and of a single corps of Artillery, with a few Engineers, subject to the Board of Ordnance. I pointed out to you that this arrangement, bad in itself, was duplicated by the Irish establishment, with its own War Office and its own Board of Ordnance and Artillery. I showed also that all matters of transport and supply were in the charge of a third department, the Treasury; that the English Militia were under a fourth department, the Home Office, and that the Scotch and Irish Militia were not yet in existence. I then laid stress on the fact that all military operations were directed by the department, whether Foreign or Colonial, which was immediately concerned, the War Office being appealed to only to provide men, as the Ordnance Office was appealed to only to provide artillerymen and material of war.

Lastly, I recounted how Pitt, through a false economy, allowed the soldier to be starved, and the ranks of the Army to be depleted in consequence; and how he permitted the discipline of the whole, already impaired by the fact that general officers received no pay as such, to be nearly ruined by subjecting the entire force to the Secretary at War, unchecked by a Commander-in-Chief.

I must now say a very brief word as to the quality

of the troops which were produced by this system. Speaking generally, I should say that both officers and men were far better than the nation had any right to expect. There were, of course, numbers of officers who knew nothing, and were content to know nothing, who shirked their duty continually, and were able to do so by the connivance, for purposes of political complaisance, of the political jobbers who reigned at the War Office. Most notably was this true of regiments quartered abroad in unpopular stations like the West Indies, Gibraltar, and Nova Scotia. No human power had ever yet succeeded in driving a large number of officers to do duty in these quarters. Some never joined their regiments; others contrived to get leave of absence; a few were always at home recruiting. On the other hand, an educated officer was, I think, better educated then than now, although the old classical training is now rejected as obsolete. Certainly, though I have encountered cases of officers, even of high rank, whose letters showed symptoms of illiteracy, I should say that the officer of a century ago wrote better and correcter English than the officer of the present. The style was apt to be a little cumbrous, as was natural when Johnson and Gibbon were the principal models; but the language was dignified and clear. Latin, it must be remembered, possessed at that time a value of its own for military students, since it was the key to Livy and Cæsar and Tacitus, and to innumerable translations from the Greek. Our ancestors had little but the classics to guide them in learning the art of war; though a knowledge of French, which several of them possessed, gave them also the campaigns of Turenne, Marshal Saxe, and Frederick the Great. Officers who were enthusiastic in their profession—and they were quite as many then, proportionately, as now—devoured these old works and every other that they could obtain. Finally, all who had really studied their business had mastered fortification, which science gave at any rate some immutable principles for attack and defence. They knew better, for instance,

than to attack a re-entrant angle before mastering the salient, which is at any rate something.

Officers thus self-trained were to be found in all ranks, and many of them were not only good Latin scholars but good linguists. In spite of all the abuse that has been lavished on the officers who flourished under the purchase-system, there were always a certain number of good and accomplished generals to hand for a high command, if only they were not debarred by an accumulation of incompetent old women at the top of the list. In 1793 we had an astonishing array of good men. Of the older school, who had served in the Seven Years' War, there were Charles Grey and Ralph Abercromby, the latter in particular a man of wide culture and excellent understanding; and Sir William Howe, who was probably the master of all in the handling of large bodies of troops. Then from the American War there was Cornwallis, whose reputation I think greater than he deserved, but who was still a good and sound officer; Simcoe, a most brilliant leader of irregulars and a very able soldier; Craig; Harris; Lord Moira, an exceptionally gifted officer; and, most brilliant perhaps of all, alike as linguist, soldier, and administrator, Charles Stuart. Of the younger generation, the most promising was John Moore. Arthur Wesley was still unknown to fame in 1793.

The greatest difficulty for generals was to obtain practice in handling large bodies of men, for, except in time of war, no considerable number of troops was ever gathered together into camp. Regimental officers also had little opportunity for training their men otherwise than in the manual exercise and formal drill. The manual exercise, however, was important, since it taught men to load and fire steadily in action; and it was an old tradition that the British should hold their fire as long as possible. The first volley in an action was always the most formidable, because every musket had been coolly and carefully loaded. The infantry already worked almost entirely in double instead of triple rank,

as it had learned in America; but the lesson of sharp-shooting, mastered in the same country, was unfortunately for long neglected. In America every battalion had made for itself a company of rifles; but this system had been dropped after return to England.

The cavalry was far behind the infantry in training; only one regiment, the Seventeenth Light Dragoons, having gone through the whole of the American War. German accounts say that, when our cavalry went to Flanders in 1793, the Austrians had to teach our officers how to post vedettes. Yet the Seventeenth in America had been as quick and as handy as any of the American irregulars. But the British cavalry generally was trained up entirely to showy field-movements, executed at great speed. The men were of a better class than the infantry; but the cavalry had the misfortune to keep many regiments in Ireland, where discipline always suffered greatly among them. Indeed, there were four regiments which had hardly left Ireland for a century, and these were as bad as regiments could be. Possibly they have not yet recovered wholly from that century.

The Artillery, having carefully trained officers and no purchase, was always a superior corps; but its worst period was from 1783 to 1793, when the spirit and the discipline were both bad. The Engineers possessed one or two officers who were equal to any in Europe. For the rest, the Treasury's regulations made efficient transport and supply almost impossible. The Army Medical Service was a foul chaos. Veterinary service there was none, beyond the ignorant farriers of the cavalry regiments. In all branches the reign of a jobbing Secretary at War and the want of a Commander-in-Chief had demoralised the officers; while the men, artificially restrained by harsh discipline at home, thought themselves entitled (not wholly without sympathy from their officers) to be lawless in the field.

And this brings me to the last point that I shall

notice—the prevalence of drinking in all ranks and classes at this period. Among the officers there was undoubtedly a great deal of hard drinking, as there was throughout the class from which they were drawn. And yet there were regiments in which drunkenness was considered disgraceful in an officer; and that feeling was gaining rather than losing ground. Among the general officers no doubt there were many who drank more port than was good for them at home, and on festive occasions perhaps on service. You may remember Harry Smith's story of a famous occasion when every man of the Light Division in Spain was more or less drunk—a matter which would have signified little had not the general in command been also so drunk that he insisted on taking the division upon a night march. It was constantly reproached against the Duke of York that he was the drunken centre of a drunken head-quarters in Flanders; but, though his staff lived in comfort and even luxury, the charge against him is absolutely untrue. Probably few men drank harder than the Secretary of State for War; and he did his best, not quite unsuccessfully, to make the Prime Minister drink as hard as himself. But they of course were privileged persons, and the leaders of the Opposition were far too hard drinkers themselves to make themselves unpleasant when the two Ministers came drunk to the House of Commons. Besides, Ministers had nothing worse to expect than a farcical trial, called an impeachment, which was decided by party votes. They had not to face a court-martial of officers jealous for the honour of their service. So the two Ministers cheerfully sent men right and left to their death, according to the principles of their own vinous strategy. It is said that General John Moore was horrified when, being admitted to this intimate circle, he realised in what fashion the affairs of the country were directed. And this is hardly surprising, when we remember that he had spent years in purging his regiment of captains and subalterns who drank hard,

thinking it wrong to trust them with the lives even of a few score soldiers.

And now it is time to enter on the business of war. Of course I cannot give you even an outline of its history, for that would fill a volume. I therefore propose only to sketch to you first the Government's military policy, or what must pass for such, and then the various measures by which they tried to execute it and to meet the various complications which arose out of it.

First, you must recall what was then our long-standing Continental policy. Briefly speaking, it was this—to maintain at all costs the integrity of Holland, and with that view to take care that what is now called Belgium, and was then called the Austrian Netherlands, should never pass into the hands of France. It was almost part of our scheme of national defence that Antwerp should never become a French base of naval operations. You will remember that the French overran Belgium in 1792, the Austrians having no sufficient force there. The chief reason for the attack was that the Revolutionary party, having succeeded in exhausting France, wanted the harvest of Belgium and the money both of Belgium and Holland. The French hesitated about taking Holland in 1792, for fear of a rupture with England; but in 1793 they gathered courage, and early in February declared war against England.

But it was in the West Indies that the French Revolution first menaced British interests. There the insane action of fanatics at Paris had roused the blacks against the whites ; and a servile war of hideous ferocity and destruction had broken out in St. Domingo, which had nearly ruined that richest colony in the world, and bade fair to ruin it altogether. The whites, having the climate and overwhelming numbers against them, were overpowered ; and the whole of the British West Indies lay quaking with fear lest their negroes should treat them in the same way. Jamaica, in particular, dreaded lest the French negroes in St. Domingo, only

twenty-four hours to windward, should cross the sea and devour her. By the end of 1792, therefore, we had no fewer than nineteen battalions out of our eighty-one of the Line in or on their way to the West Indies, where it was safe to reckon that fifty per cent of the men would die or become permanently unfit for duty every year. In India there were nine more battalions, making a total of twenty-eight quartered in climates which were then deadly. Gibraltar, at that time an unhealthy station, required six battalions; Canada, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland claimed from five to seven battalions. We may say then that half the Line-battalions of the Army were needed for duty in foreign garrisons before the war broke out.

When war was finally declared, Pitt broke away from old traditions and placed the entire conduct of the war in the hands of a single Minister, selecting the Secretary of State in charge of the Colonies. The principle was sound; the choice was disastrous. Henry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, was Pitt's most trusted friend. He was by twenty years Pitt's senior, and had taken advantage of Pitt's absolute ignorance of the world to worm himself into his confidence. He was a hard drinker and a hardened jobber, with a genial manner, incredible conceit, and convenient absence of principle. He knew no more of war than a monthly nurse, but had not the wisdom even to be conscious of his ignorance. Yet Pitt believed in him implicitly then and to the last. In the following year, when the Whigs joined him, he gave the Colonies to the Duke of Portland, and made Dundas the first Secretary of State *for* War in our history. Nay, not content with this, he actually gave him direct control of a squadron of ships, as well as of the entire Army.

It so happened that French Royalists had already approached Dundas, offering to place the French West Indies under British protection, pending the restoration of the Monarchy in France. He instantly jumped at the chance. The occupation of these rich islands

would, as he thought, look well in the Gazette, please the powerful West India merchants, divert the commerce of the French islands to England, and give safe passage to British trade to and from the West Indies. Pitt also grasped eagerly at the scheme. With a financier's eye he had reckoned, quite correctly, that France was sinking into a bottomless abyss of bankruptcy, and he thought that by cutting off her colonial commerce he would give her a finishing stroke. This, then, was his military policy—to bring France to her knees by cutting off her colonial commerce—to strike her in the West Indies on the tip of the tail, when what was needed was a blow at the heart. I have seen the policy belauded by historians of weight—there are signs of approval of it even in Captain Mahan's book—but I confess that it seems to me to the last degree fatuous. Speaking with all respect, I think that, if Captain Mahan had studied the military operations of the war in conjunction with the naval, he would be of the same opinion with myself.

Consider the position. The Austrians, having been reinforced, were about to reinvade Belgium, with good hope of success. If they triumphed in Belgium, the road lay open to Paris, for France had destroyed her old army and had not yet made a new one—in fact, had made every possible blunder to prevent herself from creating a new one. At Paris was the Convention, and in the overthrow of the Convention lay the best prospect of peace. The obvious course was to send every possible man to strengthen the Austrians and ensure the success of an advance to Paris. But it was not to be. Pitt was fascinated by the idea of the West Indies, and would think of nothing else. He knew, or might have known, that the commerce of the French West Indies was already half ruined, the plantations burned, and the slaves in revolt. He knew, or should have known, that in the West Indies he would have to contend, not with the troops of an effete monarchy, but with three hundred thousand negroes, fighting men of

ferocious bravery, drunk with the blood of white men, maddened by the sense of freedom, and not likely to submit tamely to the soldiers of slave-owners like the British. He knew, or should have known, that even if he mastered the French islands, he would need large garrisons to hold them ; and that his soldiers would die like flies, while the black would thrive unharmed. He knew or thought of none of these things ; he consulted no military men ; and by his ignorance and thoughtlessness he paralysed the arm of England during six fateful years.

And yet he was not faithful even to this policy; for it was his inconstancy towards his own projects that really wrecked all his enterprises. When Dumouriez moved upon Holland at the end of January 1793, Pitt discovered, to his dismay, that the Dutch were not inclined to defend themselves. To hearten them, he hastily sent over three unequipped battalions of Guards under the Duke of York, and to these presently added a brigade of the Line, all upon the express understanding that they were to be withdrawn directly. But when the Austrians beat Dumouriez at Neerwinden, in March 1793, Pitt determined to send further reinforcements of cavalry, and, after much hesitation, decided that they, and a large force of Germans in the hire of England, should take part in the Austrian campaign on the French frontier. But instead of urging a march on Paris, Pitt stipulated that the first duty of the allies should be to take Dunkirk, as England's indemnity for her expense and trouble. "The early capture of Dunkirk, under a prince of the blood, would give great *éclat* to the commencement of the war," wrote Dundas, thereby disclosing the whole secret of this branch of his military policy. The campaign in Flanders was to be an electioneering campaign, not a military one. As you are aware, the enterprise against Dunkirk failed completely, owing chiefly to Dundas's incompetence as a War Minister. The entire campaign of 1793 was thrown away ; the one great opportunity of crushing

revolutionary aggression was lost; and France gained a year for making an army.

But this was not all. While meddling with the operations in Flanders and making great preparations for the West Indies, the Government also dabbled in negotiation with the insurgents in La Vendée. Here was a point from which the Revolutionists might have been very severely assailed, had Pitt but possessed the sense to concentrate the whole of his force upon any one objective. Lord Moira, being consulted, asked for twelve thousand men, hoping to capture an island at the mouth of the Loire and make it a permanent base of operations. The Government weakened the force in Flanders, borrowed some of the battalions destined for the West Indies, gave him six thousand men instead of twelve thousand, despatched him a month later than the time agreed upon, and then were surprised that the expedition was a failure. This, again, was not all. In May 1793 the Mediterranean squadron put to sea; and at the end of August the great port and arsenal of Toulon, in reaction against the excesses of the Revolution, placed itself under the protection of the admiral, Lord Hood. Here was an unexpected piece of good fortune; but if Toulon was to be held against the entire force of France, obviously it needed every man that could be spared for its defence. The whole Army of England would not have been too much. It is true that Hood reported that with six thousand men he could end the war; but that was a piece of sailor's nonsense, such as sailors were far too fond of talking and Ministers of hearing in those days. Hood, Sidney Smith, Home Popham—even Nelson himself—were constantly uttering opinions of this kind from the depth of their ignorance of military matters. Home Popham, you will remember, was the man who in 1806 tried, without orders, to take what is now the Argentine Republic with one battalion of regular infantry and three companies of militia, and landed us in endless trouble in consequence. One great secret of our mili-

tary failures in this war was that Ministers took counsel of sailors instead of soldiers in projecting military enterprises, and even then not of really able sailors like St. Vincent, but of self-advertising mediocrities such as Popham and Sidney Smith.

Here, therefore, at the end of 1793 was the Government, with a force perhaps sufficient for one serious operation, and with no fewer than four in hand—Flanders, La Vendée, Toulon, and the West Indies. Did it attempt to make one of them serious? Not one. It weakened the West Indian force by seven battalions, which it kept in transports about the Isle of Wight as defence against invasion, with typhus raging among them and a regular mortality of ten men a week. It left the marines (or rather troops serving as marines) of the fleet to deal with a desperate situation, almost without any reinforcement whatever, at Toulon. It despatched its inadequate force to the West Indies; and it decided to continue its contingent with the Austrians in Flanders.

The natural result was that 1794 was a year of disaster. In the West Indies, General Grey, by very skilful operations, captured Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Lucia; and troops from Jamaica established a footing in St. Domingo. But they had hardly done so before the blacks rose in their might, at the height of the sickly season, and turned upon them. No reinforcements were sent to Grey; Dundas always treated troops as though they were immortal and their clothing as though it were imperishable; and no fleet was told off to intercept reinforcements of the enemy. Grey's force, annihilated by yellow fever, could not hold its conquests. Guadeloupe was lost; St. Lucia was lost; and at the beginning of 1795 the blacks rose in the British islands of Grenada and St. Vincent and mastered them also.

In Flanders, after a campaign of brilliant beginnings, the Duke of York, not a little owing to the treachery of the Austrians, was driven from Belgium into Holland, and thence, in a retreat far more disastrous than that of

Corunna, to the Ems, his retreat to westward having been cut off.

At Toulon the end came before the close of 1793; and Hood, who was chiefly responsible for the disastrous character of the evacuation, carried his force to Corsica, where Charles Stuart's brilliant operations compelled all the French garrisons to surrender. King George was proclaimed King of Corsica; and that, with the island of Martinique, was all that we could show for an immense expenditure of money, and an acknowledged loss of over 18,000 men dead or permanently disabled from service, chiefly through yellow fever in the West Indies.

Thus, at the opening of 1795, Toulon and Flanders ceased to be spheres of British operations; but the Dutch Stadtholder had ordered his governors to make over to our protection the Dutch Colonies; and this led to expeditions which captured, without much difficulty, Ceylon and the Cape. On the coast of France the Government directed two very foolish and abortive expeditions to Quiberon and the Isle Dieu, frittering away force to no purpose. Indeed, the expedition to Isle Dieu was little short of criminal in its folly. All these enterprises, of course, distracted reinforcements from the West Indies, which—particularly St. Domingo—remained a frightful millstone round our necks. It was necessary to send a powerful expedition under Abercromby to recover Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia; and this unlucky force, starting, as usual, too late, was repeatedly blown back to England in the winter of 1795, and did not reach the West Indies until March 1796. Then Abercromby accomplished his task of recapture; and having done so proceeded, according to his orders, to Porto Rico, where he found attack impracticable, and to Trinidad, which he successfully captured. You will observe the insatiable appetite of the Government for tropical islands, though Ministers knew that they swallowed up men as sand swallows up water. They had already taken and lost Guadeloupe; they had

taken and held St. Lucia, Martinique, and St. Domingo from the French ; Surinam, Berbice, and Demerara from the Dutch. The drain of men was frightful ; and had not the Generals insisted upon raising West India Regiments, forcing this measure upon the Government in spite of all the opposition of the West India merchants, we should have been forced to evacuate the whole of these conquests. As to St. Domingo, the waste of money and men was simply appalling. The Government, absolutely ignorant of all military matters, and too arrogant to seek military advice, was always frittering away its force on a dozen little objects, and would never send men there except in driblets, sufficiently large to make a heavy mortality, too small to produce the slightest impression. At last the Ministers themselves took fright at the expense, but had not the courage to evacuate the country. It was actually left to a strong, clear-headed lieutenant-colonel, Thomas Maitland, later known as "King Tom of Malta," to evacuate the place upon his own responsibility in 1798, and thus to pull this pusillanimous Government out of the quagmire. What that miserable island cost us is incalculable. Whole battalions were annihilated, leaving little trace behind, and I have found it impossible to reckon up the number of men that we buried there. I could not put the figure lower than at 20,000, and this represents but a fraction of the total loss. In 1795 and 1796 it was acknowledged that over 40,000 men were discharged from the service as disabled by wounds and infirmity. I believe myself that the return is too favourable ; but it is certain that most of these discharged soldiers came from the West Indies, hopelessly debilitated by the climate. Altogether, I reckon that these West Indian enterprises must have cost us in the Army and Navy fully 100,000 men dead or disabled from service —and all for nothing. France was little the worse ; and the commercial advantage to England was far outweighed by the enormous waste of men and treasure. You will now understand why I said that Pitt's insane

military policy crippled us for six years. Yet he continued to take more West Indian islands, all unhealthy and all requiring garrisons, until 1801.

Meanwhile the Government continued to indulge in meaningless little operations in Europe. It was very soon discovered—as might easily have been ascertained beforehand—that Corsica could not be held ; and at the end of 1796 it was evacuated, and the Mediterranean with it. Since, however, Spain in 1797 threatened to invade Portugal, the troops from Corsica, about 6000 men, were sent on to Lisbon, under command of Charles Stuart, where many of them remained doing nothing for nearly eighteen months. In the interval the Government discussed a project for an expedition against the Spanish Colonies in South America, but the Irish rebellion of 1798 fortunately put an end to this. In that year, however, the Government at last took a step with a definite end, and sent some of the Portuguese force under Stuart to capture Minorca. This, which was successfully accomplished, gave England a base in the Mediterranean ; and in 1799 Stuart adroitly seized the opportunity to occupy Messina. He then prepared a great scheme for making Sicily, with its vast wealth of supplies, the British base for operations against the French on the Italian coast between Toulon and Genoa. In June 1799 he represented to Dundas the vast importance of operations in the Mediterranean ; but Dundas, having by chance a few trained troops at his disposal, had already evolved from the depths of his imbecility a plan for the reconquest of Holland. Abercromby, who was first entrusted with the command, pointed out that the risks of the expedition were greater than were warranted by the importance of the object. "There are some persons," answered Pitt, "who have a pleasure in opposing whatever is proposed." This was the characteristic attitude of Ministers towards soldiers even of established reputation. Abercromby was not only an extremely able officer, but quite as well educated as Pitt, quite as well read, and with

infinitely greater knowledge of the world. Yet his opinion was set aside, though, ignoring Pitt's rudeness, he continued to press it. The expedition was despatched —and despatched, in spite of Abercromby's protests, without any land-transport. Consequently it failed, with disgrace verging upon disaster, through no fault of any one except Pitt and Dundas.

Then Stuart pressed his plan for the Mediterranean, asking only for fifteen thousand men to crush the French under Massena in Italy, in concert with the Austrians, before reinforcements could reach them from France. The Government offered him five thousand, and he threw up his commission as Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean in disgust. Then Dundas resumed his policy of little niggling operations. A force was sent in May 1800 under Maitland to take Belleisle and co-operate with the French insurgents, the Chouans, on the Atlantic coast. The enterprise was found impracticable. Then Abercromby was sent to co-operate with the Austrians on the Genoese coast —too late, for Marengo had been fought and lost. Then an expedition under Sir James Pulteney was sent to capture Ferrol: the enterprise was found impracticable. Then Abercromby was ordered to take first Teneriffe, and then Cadiz. The enterprise against Teneriffe was abandoned, and that against Cadiz was found impossible. Then Abercromby was instructed to look to the blockade of Malta; and finally, since all these various forces had drifted to Lisbon or Minorca (some of them after six months on shipboard), he was at last ordered to undertake the expedition to Egypt. So great was the distrust of Dundas's projects in the Cabinet that he had great difficulty in persuading his colleagues to sanction this, his one successful enterprise, which, by the way, had been suggested by Sidney Smith. Nor need I add that his instructions were so inept, and his calculations as to the resources at Abercromby's disposal so erroneous, that even the gentle old veteran answered him with sarcasm. It is a positive

fact that Dundas expected Abercromby to defeat the French and capture Alexandria with no water except what could be carried from the ships upon his men's backs. It is well known that water was found by digging under palm trees, by Sidney Smith's advice; but Dundas did not know of this resource, nor did Abercromby. "There are risks in a British warfare unknown to any other service," wrote Abercromby, with grim indignation; and this was no more than the truth. The risks lay not only in the ignorance of Ministers, but in their tardiness, their want of secrecy, and their passion for interference. There was not an expedition at this period in which the most secret instructions of the commanders were not well known to every one in England, and even better known to the enemy. In fact, you may read in Marryat's novels that "most secret orders" were a byword for publicity. As to the interference with the operations when fairly in progress, I could weary you, though I think that I might in some instances astonish you, with examples. The assurance with which Ministers took upon themselves to direct movements in the field has really something of the sublime. Some people, who admire Lord John Russell's readiness to take command of the Channel Fleet, call this assurance self-confidence; others stigmatise it by the less flattering term of arrogance. In reality, it is no more than conceit, subtly mingled with timidity. You will now, I hope, understand how it was that the British Army won few laurels in the great war until Abercromby, a man of sixty-seven, effected that most brilliant disembarkation on the sands near Alexandria.

I turn now to the administrative work in the military department, the raising of the levies, and so forth. It need not be said that at the outbreak of hostilities there were practically no troops, and little prospect of obtaining any, so unpopular had Pitt rendered military service by starving the soldier. The first step was, of course, to augment the establishment of existing

regiments, which was effected in some measure by allowing lieutenants to raise one hundred independent companies of one hundred men each for rank—that is to say, for promotion in the Army, and drafting these recruits into different corps. The first troops sent abroad, as I have said, was a brigade of Guards—three weak battalions, made up by drafts from the seven battalions of the three regiments. The brigade of the Line which followed it would never have been sent at all if the military authorities had been consulted; for two out of the three battalions were composed wholly of the worst stamp of recruit, and on arrival in Flanders were at once placed in garrison, as unfit for the field. Of such battalions as possessed a few men, the Navy at once claimed four, and shortly afterwards two more; and by April, two months after the declaration of war, the Horse Guards could not find a battalion for service anywhere. The natural result of underpaying the men was that recruits could only be obtained by offering large bounties. At the very beginning of the war it was accepted that no recruit could be procured for a smaller sum than fifteen guineas; of which five guineas went to the recruiting officers, something over two pounds to the purchase of necessaries, and a little less than eight pounds in cash to the recruit. This, of course, was a costly arrangement; and to meet it a general officer devised an ingenious scheme for making the augmentation pay for itself. To existing regiments new troops and companies were added, which were to be raised by lieutenants in three months. For their reward they were to receive promotion, either free or at a reduced rate, with liberty to choose their subalterns for promotion; and the expense of the levy was to be met by the sale of the vacant cornetcies and ensigncies. In the case of the infantry two additional field-officers were added, so as to increase the funds accruing by purchase of promotion. The scheme was so much relished that it was resolved to raise twelve new

regiments of infantry (most of which still survive) upon the same principle—that is to say, of selling all the commissions except that of colonel, and so paying two-thirds of the expense of the levy, namely, ten guineas for every man, while the State added the remaining five guineas only. The scheme, it need hardly be said, broke down very early, as schemes for obtaining everything for nothing generally do; but, successful or unsuccessful, it was persistently tried during the next two or three years.

Meanwhile, of course, the Militia was embodied to a strength of about 35,000 men, but substitutes were freely accepted in lieu of personal service. In Ireland a Militia Act was passed after the English model, and amid violent riots a ballot was held and a Militia formed, which soon proved itself utterly worthless owing to the miserable character of the officers. In Scotland recourse was again made to the principle of raising Fencible regiments—regular troops enlisted for home service only and for the duration of the war only. The number of regiments now formed was nine, all of them of infantry, the cost per man being set down at ten guineas against the fifteen required for a recruit for general service.

Thus you will observe that there were Militia-substitutes and Fencibles both competing with the regular Army for recruits. But the Government, having made up its mind that the war would only last a year, took no heed of this.

In 1794 matters became more serious. Carnot, who had risen to the head of French military administration, boldly framed his plans for an invasion of England, and practically made no secret of his intention. It is difficult to believe that so able a man and so scientific a soldier could have contemplated this seriously, looking to the miserable condition of the French Navy; but there was a curious Republican exaltation in this otherwise cold and austere man, and I cannot doubt that he thought the project feasible,

possibly counting on the mutinous spirit in the fleet which afterwards showed itself in 1797. We are always taught to applaud the deeds of the Navy without stint during the war of the French Revolution, and no one yields to myself in admiration for that noble service. But I have looked enough behind the scenes in those times to satisfy myself that in 1793 the state of the Navy was not less rotten than that of the Army, and for precisely the same cause—neglect of the Government. The Navy never had to fight any but a very inferior foe, such as the Army beat again and again in 1793 and 1794. But whereas the French Navy never improved, the French Army was made the finest in the world; and this fact is too generally forgotten in comparing the merits of the two services.

The Government was vaguely aware of the deficiencies of the British Navy, though it would not remedy them, and was therefore much alarmed by Carnot's threat of invasion. Its first step therefore was to augment the Militia. An Act was passed empowering the Lords-Lieutenant to accept Volunteer companies and isolated individual volunteers, to be added to the Militia, and to authorise the parish authorities to pay these so-called volunteers a sum not exceeding ten pounds for the duty. This was the old system of enrolling volunteers, and the only sound one, namely, to affiliate them directly to the Militia.

Next, however, the Government proceeded to a very fateful step. It passed an Act to encourage and discipline distinct corps of Volunteers, cavalry and infantry, formed by towns and associations for local defence. The encouragement consisted in exempting these volunteers from the Militia ballot, on their producing a certificate that they had attended all drills held for six weeks before the hearing of appeals against the Militia-list. Thus a force, which might or might not possess military value, was set up in competition with the Militia, and the first step was taken towards lowering the national force in the eyes of the nation, at

the very moment when true policy cried out that it should be exalted. But, as is only too plain, the civilians who then governed our military administration were incapable of thinking out any real military policy. Pitt assured himself that the war would soon be over, and that he would be at liberty to accomplish the great domestic reforms which it was his ambition—and a very noble ambition—to compass. But he did not understand that the peace which is needed for domestic reform can only be assured by a sound military organisation.

The Volunteer movement did not attain at once to the dimensions which it reached in 1803. The records of the War Office are in such confusion at this time that it is difficult to ascertain what number of volunteers was enrolled, but in 1794 there were raised, so far as I can ascertain, twenty-eight corps of Volunteer cavalry, and one hundred and twenty-four companies of Volunteer infantry. In 1795 there were added six more of cavalry and sixty-two of infantry; in 1796, one more of cavalry and fourteen more of infantry; in 1797, the year of the Naval mutiny, thirty-one more of cavalry and two hundred and forty-one of infantry; in 1798, nine more of cavalry and thirty-four more of infantry—making in all seventy-five corps of cavalry, with an average, say, of three troops, and four hundred and seventy-five companies of infantry with a few of artillery included.[1] Whether these figures are correct and complete I cannot say. I have extracted them from the War Office records; but no very careful account of Volunteers seems to have been kept until 1803. The Volunteer cavalry was of course what is now called the Yeomanry, perhaps the one valuable product of the measure; for the British farmer has always held the Militia in great contempt, and his class is too valuable to be neglected in any scheme of

[1] It is extremely difficult to arrive at any correct estimate of the numbers, but I should take the Yeomanry at 11,000 and the Volunteers at 26,000.

national defence. Meanwhile I must caution you against accepting this Volunteer movement of 1794 onward as essentially a patriotic movement. It was inspired by the prospect of escaping from the ballot.

A still more formidable competitor with the regular Army was the Fencible force, which in 1794 was very largely increased both in cavalry and infantry. In 1794 there were raised—or letters of service were issued for raising—thirty-one corps of Fencible infantry and twenty-one of Fencible cavalry; in 1795, four corps of Fencible infantry and one of Fencible cavalry; and then no more until 1798, the year of the Irish Rebellion, when there were raised seventeen additional regiments of Fencible infantry. According to some old monthly Army Lists in my possession, the greatest number of regiments or battalions of Fencibles in existence at any one time was thirty-one of cavalry and forty-three of infantry; and from 1794 onward the force may be reckoned at from 20,000 to 25,000 men, A few regiments were engaged for service in Europe. and thus at least one of them found its way to Minorca in 1799-1800. Meanwhile I would call your attention to the fact that the life of these Fencibles was prolonged after the passing of the Act in 1797 for the creation of 6000 Scottish Militia.

It will be convenient also to mention at this point yet another force raised for home defence by an Act of November 1796, when the nation was in its most doleful and anxious state. This was the Provisional Cavalry, consisting of one horseman to be furnished, clothed, and equipped, for every ten horses kept for riding or for carriages; persons keeping fewer than ten horses being classed together to maintain their horsemen jointly. This force was entitled to pay, if called out, and when embodied in 1797 was reckoned at 15,000 men. I need not comment on the defects of this hap-hazard policy of temporary expedients and makeshifts.

The ground is now cleared for dealing with the regular Army. At the end of 1793, and still more in the spring of 1794, the Government suddenly awoke to the fact that it needed a large number of regular troops for its innumerable enterprises, and set to work to raise them, without the slightest consideration, by the first means that offered themselves. The most promising scheme seemed to be to raise new regiments; and accordingly in the year 1794 alone there were raised, really or nominally, thirty completely new regiments of infantry, five second battalions belonging either to these or to the new regiments of 1793, six new regiments of light dragoons, a corps of waggoners, and some fifty independent companies of infantry. The terms on which these corps were formed were various—so various, indeed, that nobody could quite keep count of them. Frantic efforts were made to make the new levies pay for themselves; captains, lieutenants, and ensigns receiving the offer of a step and pay on the unattached list, on raising respectively one hundred, fifty-five, and twenty men; while it was hoped that the expense of the new levies would be defrayed by the purchase of their vacated commissions. But very soon the Government settled down to offer to any man permanent rank in the Army in proportion to the number of recruits that he could raise. And then there began such a gamble in the recruiting market as has never been known before nor since. The price of recruits rose to thirty pounds. Wives of officers—you may read it in the letters of Lady Sarah Lennox, the mother of the Napiers—would not take a house without inquiring if the neighbourhood abounded in likely young men of five feet four inches. They would relate with triumph to their friends that they had ten recruits in Dublin, fifteen somewhere else, a dozen somewhere else—all to make up the one hundred men that made a lieutenant-colonel of a major, and a major of a captain; the fifty men that made a lieutenant into a captain; the twenty men that made an ensign into a

lieutenant. By a cruel mockery, officers of six years' standing in their rank—the very men who could not, presumably, afford to purchase—were permitted to offer larger bounties than others. The longest purses, of course, carried the day; rich men who wished to make their sons into gentlemen saw their opportunity, and the outrages of crimps became unendurable. Then a new class besides the crimps began to join in the mischief—the Army brokers, who arranged for purchases and exchanges. "In a few weeks," wrote an indignant officer, "they could dance any beardless youth who would come up to their price from one new raised corps to another, and for a further douceur would procure him a permanent appointment in the Standing Army." The parent of one field-officer thus created wrote for leave of absence for his son that he might complete his education, as he was too young to leave school. Men of bad character, who had been obliged to sell out of the Army, after a lucky evening at the gaming-table carried off their winnings to the brokers and reappeared as lieutenant-colonels. One notorious blackleg managed to foist his son into the command of a regiment. And all these undesirable creatures jumped over the heads of the genuine officers of the Army, who were doing duty with their regiments, often in a deadly climate, in face of the enemy. The honest workers thus found themselves, to the intense indignation of themselves and their commanders, in a manner superseded. A number of the new sham officers were sent with their regiments to Flanders towards the close of the campaign, and were a principal cause of the disasters of the retreat through Holland. Some of them were well-meaning but knew nothing, and yet by their seniority found themselves in command of brigades. Some of them were worthless, drunken blackguards, who never dreamed of marching with their men, but after a hard night's drinking would mount their horses at noon and gallop, not yet sober, after their regiments, riding over everything that stood in their way, and

throwing the whole line of march into disorder. They took with them every luxury and abundance of baggage, were subject to no discipline, and from their high rank and the want of senior officers were hopelessly intractable. It was of them that the Hanoverian General Walmoden, at the close of the retreat, wrote to Dundas the most terrible words ever written of a British force: "Your army is destroyed; that is to say, the men are. The officers and their baggage are safe."

I need hardly say that this atrocious system was instituted wholly by civilians, against the protests of Lord Amherst, the Duke of York, and every military man. It was literally true that by the end of 1794 the old British Army had been destroyed, both officers and men. It fell to the Duke of York, who in February 1795 was appointed Commander-in-Chief, to reduce the chaos to order. Being a Coldstreamer, he surrounded himself with Coldstreamers for his chief advisers, which, though in principle wrong, produced good results; for Hewgill, Brownrigg, and Calvert were most capable men. The Secretary at War also was a capable man, the gentle and highly gifted William Windham, who, for all his devotion to abstruse classical and mathematical studies, alone among civilians possessed sound ideas about the carrying on of war. The Duke's first step was to order that all officers addressing the Commander-in-Chief must do so through their commanding officers, as a beginning towards the improvement of discipline. Then he entered forthwith upon a regular crusade against officers absent without leave, and put four such offenders, who were members of the Irish Parliament, under arrest at once. This crusade he continued for several years; and, after great numbers of officers had been superseded, the Duke gained his point. Then he circulated the new drill-book written by David Dundas in 1788, with orders that it was to be adopted at once, directing further that for all infantry there should be battalion-drill on two days a week, brigade-drill on one day, and division-drill on one day. He also abolished

hair-powder—an order which required to be repeated before colonels would obey it. Meanwhile, since the new corps had deprived the old of all chance of obtaining recruits, he disbanded thirty-five or more of them, keeping none above the number One Hundred (the oldest regiment now surviving of that date is the Ninety-third), made all regiments up to ten companies of a uniform strength of 110 men, and added two depot-companies for all regiments abroad. Still the call for men in the West Indies was so heavy and so pressing that there was no time to devise new measures to meet it. Very shortly before he took office, the Government, at the end of its resources, had made a contract with an individual — formerly an officer — in Ireland, to deliver 4000 recruits at twenty guineas a head. This climax of wickedness and folly infuriated both civilians and military men, and brought a most dangerous class of recruit into the service. Yet this evil system had been initiated, and could not immediately be checked. The reckless haste of the Government had brought about other evils also. The Fencibles had enlisted a number of seamen, and the Navy was consequently frantic with rage. The dearth of seamen, in fact, was so great that four separate Acts were passed in the one year 1795 to levy men for the fleet in the parishes and ports of Great Britain. Even this did not satisfy the Navy, and a fifth Act was necessary, empowering colonels of Militia to discharge one-tenth of their men for the fleet. Since artillerymen also were wofully deficient, the Militia was required further to turn over any trained gunners in its ranks to the artillery. This was the first sign of a principle which was shortly to become sacred—when in doubt, rob the Militia. But with all this, there were men from no fewer than fifteen regiments serving in the fleet in 1795.

As to the Army, it was resolved to reduce the establishment of the Fencibles, in the hope that some of the discharged men might enlist in the regulars. Beyond that resource, there was nothing for it but to fall back

on the raising of new regiments, for the purpose of drafting them, immediately upon completion, into existing regiments. Eleven such drafting corps were therefore authorised in 1796, five more in the great alarm of 1798, and one or two more even later. The only thing to be said for the system is that, with care, the more respectable form of crimp could be preferred to the more disreputable; but at least one of these drafting corps was detected to be a fraudulent concern. In fact, the imbecility of the Government in 1794 had demoralised everything and everybody concerned with recruiting, and such an evil was not easily banished. It is worthy of remark that at this trying time—that is to say in 1795—the experiment was tried of composing three battalions of parish boys of fifteen and even tenderer years. The ultimate result was a remarkable success, but of course the process was necessarily slow.

At the end of 1796 the Government resolved to form a Supplementary Militia, additional to the 42,000 already embodied. This was to be supplied by the ballot, but substitutes were accepted; and if two-thirds of the quota for each district were supplied by volunteers, then the ballot might be suspended in the hope of making up the full number without it. The parish authorities were empowered to offer bounties up to the sum of four guineas to such volunteers; and, as this new force was liable to only twenty days' training a year, unless called out for special emergency, the service did not promise to be heavy. At the same time an Act was passed for levying a certain proportion of men in all the counties of England—the maritime counties to supply the Navy, and the inland counties to recruit the Army. This was a strong measure, but the drain of recruits had been heavy. In 1793 those raised for the regular forces had amounted to 17,000, in 1794 to 38,000, and in 1795 to 40,000. In 1796 and 1797 the numbers fell to 16,000, and, with the idea of lightening the burden of foreign garrisons, the Government, at the end of 1797, passed an Act empowering the King to

enlist foreigners, and created for the said foreigners, who were chiefly Dutch soldiers of the Orange party, a fifth battalion, to which later on there were added a sixth, seventh, and eighth, in the Sixtieth Regiment. But by far the most important change of 1797 was that, frightened out of its senses by the mutinies of the fleet, the Government at last consented to raise the pay of the Army. The military authorities had been pleading for it for years; and at last, when the Ministers had well-nigh ruined the country by withholding just wages from the soldier and the sailor, the concession was made in a panic. A great deal is made of the story that Pitt, after receiving the news of the mutiny at Spithead, turned over in bed and went to sleep again. I see nothing in it but the force of habit, for he had been asleep for fourteen years to all claims and grievances of the Army and Navy.

Immediately afterwards, in January 1798, the policy which has ever since been followed in the matter of recruiting was finally adopted. An Act was passed empowering any duly qualified person to enlist men from the Supplementary Militia for any regiment named by the King, provided that the total number did not exceed 10,000 men, nor one-fifth of the Supplementary Militia in any one county. Then, with the peril of the Irish Rebellion upon it, Parliament passed an Act also for a levy *en masse* of the whole male population from fifteen to sixty years of age, for registration of boats, waggons, and so forth, and for compensation for losses suffered in case of invasion. The raising and organisation of this levy was left to the Lords-Lieutenant and Deputy-Lieutenants, who were entrusted with the same powers as for raising the Militia. To save as much trouble as possible, however, it was provided that Volunteers enrolling themselves from the date of the Act should not be liable to be called out by the General of their district, unless the enemy were on the coast or had actually landed.

Thus, as usual, everything was made easy for the

Volunteers, while 12,000 Militia, being empowered by a special Act to do so, went to Ireland to quell the rebellion. In January 1799 further indulgence was given to the Volunteers by exempting them from service in the Supplementary Militia, provided their corps engaged itself to serve in any part of its military district in case of invasion. To make this indulgence doubly sure, all members of Volunteer corps were exempted by a second Act from service in the Militia, provided that their commanding officers could certify that they had been inspected by a General within three months.

But, in truth, by the end of 1798 the worst of the danger was over. The Irish Rebellion was quelled; Bonaparte was safe in Egypt; and St. Domingo had been evacuated. An Act was therefore passed to reduce the Militia and increase the regular Army. The numbers of the Militia in all the counties were cut down, but any militiaman who absented himself was liable to be apprehended, and to be condemned to further service in the Militia or to be enlisted in the regulars. All deserters from the Militia were pardoned on condition of enlistment. Certain regular regiments were then empowered to receive volunteers from the Militia, the conditions being that these regiments were not to serve out of Europe for five years, nor during continuance of the war and six months after the conclusion of peace. (This last condition, I may remark, was found extremely inconvenient when Abercromby's force was ordered to Egypt; for the Minister for War had quite forgotten all about it, or, it may be, had forgotten that Egypt is in Africa. However, the men, as usual, solved the difficulty by volunteering for the service in hand.) As a further inducement to the militiamen, it was enacted that they should not be drafted against their will from the regiments which they had chosen—a matter about which the authorities were extremely unscrupulous. Finally came the one clause for which the militiamen really cared, offering a bounty of ten pounds to the

volunteers aforesaid—one-third of it to be paid to them at once, one guinea to be reserved for their necessaries, and the balance to be given to them on their arrival at head-quarters. The only limitation on the number of volunteers was that it must not exceed one-quarter of the full complement. The Act further empowered the King to disembody any part or the whole of the Supplementary and other Militia, giving liberty to the men to enlist in the regular Army. If they did not enlist they were liable to be recalled to the Militia; but if any man enlisted voluntarily in the regulars he saved another man from the ballot to fill his place.

It was out of the first-fruits of this Act that Dundas formed the army which he sent to North Holland. The men joined their regiments riotously drunk, and had not even received the clothing of their new corps when they were hurried across the German Ocean. But this was the way with Dundas. He had generally not nearly men enough for his multitude of foolish expeditions; but if by chance he found himself with a few troops ready to his hand he was not easy until he had plunged them, often before they had even received their arms, into some new foolish expedition.

However, the experiment of recruiting from the Militia was so successful that in October 1799 a new Act was passed, enabling an unlimited number of Militia to enlist on the same conditions, and that not only as individuals but as whole companies, so as to form second battalions to the regular regiments. Officers also received encouragement to volunteer from the Militia into the regulars, and thus the Militia was finally made into what it is now—a simple recruiting depot for the Army. It is the fashion to despise this much-injured force, and yet it was the salvation of the country in the Napoleonic wars. Without it the regular Army could not have been kept alive from 1798 to 1814; for the system of 1799 was maintained, with superficial variations, to the end. Many excellent people boast that we have never had conscription, and in a sense it is true. But we had the ballot

for the Militia, and Acts of Parliament to bully, badger, and bribe the balloted men till they "volunteered" for the regular Army. Let any man consider the insidious provisions of that Act of 1799, and deny, if he can, not whether we have had conscription, but whether we have ever had compulsory service. Finally, look at the Act for levying men for the Army as well as the Navy from parish to parish. There is no mistake about compulsory service there.

So this question was decided, for better or worse; and meanwhile the Duke of York worked unceasingly for the improvement of the Army in other respects. He improved the drill, saddlery, and equipment of the cavalry, abolished many abuses and pedantries, introduced sword-exercise, codified and made uniform the signals of trumpet and bugle. He relieved the artillery of the burden of manning battalion-guns and galloping guns, by training detachments of infantry and cavalry to work them. He formed a corps of drivers for the artillery. He instituted corps of riflemen in the infantry. He reformed the medical service, and introduced vaccination into the Army. He created a veterinary service. He formed a Corps of Waggoners to bring transport into line with military needs. He prescribed distinction of dress for the staff, and procured regular pay for general officers. Above all, he heightened the efficiency of the Army twenty-fold by claiming for soldiers the military administration of the Army, and by enforcing on all ranks the strictest discipline. With all his faults in private life, with all his failings in the field, with all his defects of character, the Duke of York did more for the Army than any one man did during the first two centuries of its existence. It is fitting that in this place I should close my lecture with his name; for in the year 1800 he founded the Royal Military College, of which the senior department is the Staff College.

(*Cavalry School, November* 22, 1904)

III

GENTLEMEN—Your Commandant has asked me to give you some account of the past history of our cavalry. You must not be discouraged at the outset if I tell you that the military bent of the English has, from the earliest times, been always towards infantry rather than cavalry. If you come to think of it, this could hardly have been otherwise. What manner of country is it that naturally breeds cavalry? A country of wide plains, where horsemen can move in large numbers and find forage for their horses; and wide plains mean, generally speaking, a dry climate, for there are no mountains to bring down the rain. And what were the advantages which first induced men, do you suppose, to fight on horseback instead of on foot? I think almost certainly the advantage of greater mobility only—the advantage of being able to travel forth a long distance, and, what is much more important, to travel back again. For the natural cavalry in the world—the nations or tribes that lived on horseback—were, so far as my knowledge goes, essentially predatory people, in fact, bands of robbers. They might live a kind of quiet pastoral or nomadic life so long as they could find ground enough to support them; but invariably they found either want or the prosperity of their neighbours a sufficient inducement to them to go plundering or cattle-lifting; and under some leader of more than ordinary ability they became predatory bands. Of course, the first and essential need of such natives was a good breed of horses, and I think that we may take

it for granted that the natural horse—the horse that runs in herds and is not artificially bred—thrives better in a dry than in a wet climate. This was another reason that confined natural cavalry to the plains. If we look to the great plains of Europe, we find Hussars in Hungary, Cossacks in Russia. If we look to the great plains of Asia, we encounter, to give only the instances most familiar to us, the Mahrattas who overran Central India, and the Mysoreans who lived on the great tableland on the summit of the Ghauts and descended constantly to ravage the Carnatic. In Africa, we find tribes which furnish the proverbial instances of the closest possible alliance between a man and his horse. Even in North America, the tribes that lived on horseback were on the great plains that lie between the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains—living, it is true, less by plunder than by the chase, for the simple reason that buffalo were plentiful and plunder of any other kind not very abundant.

Now you will see at once that in a little island like ours there was at first no opening for cavalry. The climate is damp and sunless; the few plains of any extent were swamp and fen, and the remainder of the country was chiefly forest. There were horses, or rather ponies, but a man could move from place to place almost as fast on his own feet as on his pony's back; and, as to fighting on horseback, there was, or at any rate there seemed to be, no great advantage in it. Hence it was the custom, as we know from chronicles previous to the Conquest, for the English, even if they rode on the march, always to dismount for action; and we shall presently see that they forced this custom even upon the foreigners who came and conquered them.

The Normans, as you are aware, brought with them what may be called the Continental system, by which fighting was made the business of a particular caste—a caste which was far too proud to fight afoot, but rode roughshod over every one, mailed in armour from top

to toe, invulnerable, and for a time invincible. There was, however, one peculiarity about the men-at-arms or mailed horsemen of feudal Europe which distinguished them from the born cavalry of Asia and Africa. They fought rather as a body and not as individuals. The natural cavalryman, so far as I can gather, trusted chiefly to his individual skill as horseman and swordsman in the fight. He and his fellows fought in swarms, but not in troops. With chain armour of tiny links, strong but light, with a perfectly trained animal which would obey the slightest touch of hand or heel, and a curved sword with an edge like a razor, the Asiatic fought hand to hand indeed, but by skill and not by shock. His stirrups were always so short—and this, I think, is a feature common to all, or nearly all, natural cavalry—that he could stand up almost to his full stature above his saddle and wield his sword with as much certainty as though he were standing on the ground. The mailed man-at-arms of Europe was incapable of such fine fighting as this. His armour was of heavy scales or plates, which hampered his movements; he himself was heavier, as he still is, than his opponent from the East; and he could not rise in his saddle, from all the weight that he had to carry, so that he rode with his stirrups long. Finally, his horse, in order to carry all the load set upon him, was a stolid, heavy-shouldered, underbred brute, slow on his legs and clumsy in his movements, and under but imperfect control from his rider. The only chance for such a horseman was to keep his lighter foe at a distance; hence his weapon was a lance, and he fought not singly, but in a great mass with his comrades, the whole of them being packed together in a dense column so closely that, as it was said, an apple thrown among them would not reach the ground. In this formation men-at-arms moved forward, of course very slowly, and strove by sheer weight to bear down all before them. Of course, when such a body of men attacked any unfortunate body of infantry which was armed

only with the primitive weapons of spear and shield, they crushed them without any trouble at all; and hence for long they had things all their own way. But man to man against an Oriental opponent, whether they were armed with sword, lance, or battle-axe, the odds were generally in favour of the Oriental, who could manœuvre to gain the side of his adversary's bridle-hand, cut his reins, and practically hold him at his mercy.

This heavy cavalry, therefore, was foisted upon England from the Continent; but side by side with it we find in existence a native light cavalry, protected by a padded doublet and an iron helmet, and armed with a sword. They were called hobelars, from the hobbies or ponies which they rode, and were established apparently to patrol the coast. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know what part, if any, they played in war, though, as I shall presently explain, I have strong suspicions upon the subject. But now we come to the most remarkable point in the history of the new mailed cavalry —let us call them by their name of men-at-arms—as developed in England. The English forced their own fashion upon them, and made them fight on foot—in fact, turned them into pikemen on the day of action. Thus they were not really cavalry at all, but mounted infantry, and as such they won Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. Note, however, that they could never have won these actions alone, without the archers, who were drawn up on their flanks. Shock action of cavalry could not be met and defeated by shock action, or passive resistance, of infantry. It was defeated by arrows, or, in plain words, by missile action; and much as we—and indeed all other nations—talk of prowess with the bayonet, the solid fact remains that it is chiefly as masters of missile action that our infantry has won renown. It is a curious point to notice that the archers were not all foot-soldiers, but included a certain proportion of mounted archers, who at Crécy received double pay, though at Agincourt only the same pay as the foot-archers. I have very little doubt that

they fought on foot. There have been, of course, in Europe and Asia natural cavalrymen who used the bow from the saddle; indeed, there were some present at the battle of Leipsic. There was also, as you know, a short as well as a long bow in England. But the long-bow was the favourite weapon, and the training of men to its use must have made them prefer not to use any bow from the saddle. Yet you must not think that the function of the cavalry, as cavalry, wholly disappeared at this time, for at Poitiers a portion of the men-at-arms was used for direct attack upon troops already shaken by the volleys of archers, so that a very important part in the action was played by what may be termed cavalry proper. Moreover, it became customary either to hold a body of mounted men in reserve, or to remount the dismounted men-at-arms for pursuit.

Meanwhile, in Switzerland an infantry had been formed which was soon to work a revolution in the tactics of cavalry. Weary of being bullied by masses of mailed men-at-arms, the Swiss resolved, having no archers, to meet them with their own weapons. They armed their foot with pikes fourteen feet long, and formed them into dense square masses which kept the men-at-arms effectually at a distance. After the experience of the English archers, who, it must be remembered, shot at the horses and not at the men, the fashion came in of covering horses as well as men with mail; but a long pike could always find a vulnerable spot in the horse if not in the man; and, in fact, the long pike fairly beat the man-at-arms. From that moment infantry began to gain importance in the world, and the long pike gradually spread itself all over Europe. But then came another complication, the invention of gunpowder, which gave a new opening to cavalry proper. Infantry now became divided into two kinds: the pikes, who were drawn up in a solid mass in the centre, and the musketeers, or (to give them their contemporary name) the shot, who skir-

mished in loose order upon their flanks. I say, in loose order, because the musket, in its old cumbrous form of long barrel, rest, and matchlock, was far too unwieldy to allow men to preserve any formation. Now, of course, where infantry fight as skirmishers, with a slow-loading weapon, cavalry must have its chance. It is true that the musketeers were expected to rush for the square of pikes at the first threat of danger, and to convert it into a centre, not only of shock, but of missile action. Still, for their better protection, they carried often short pikes, called Swedish feathers, which they could stick into the ground before them, to check the cavalry while they fired. The archers at Agincourt had used wooden stakes for exactly the same purpose, so that the idea was nothing new.

In these changing circumstances the men-at-arms began to forsake their former tactics. It was useless for them to pack themselves into a huge, unwieldly mass, only able to move at a foot's pace, when they could not hope to break a square of pikes, and might suffer heavily from the bullets of the musketeers. They tried to meet the difficulty by heaping on fresh thicknesses of iron, but found that the weight almost forbade them to move, while if unhorsed they were absolutely helpless. Many an overthrown man-at-arms at this period was battered to death inside his shell, before his enemy could get at his throat to cut it. Finally, they gave up the idea of keeping bullets out, lightened their armour or dispensed with it altogether, and changed the dense formation in column to that of line, wherein they could hope to make up in speed for what they had lost in weight. But the difficulty in this case was that the men would not always move forward in line, being imperfectly disciplined; and many commanders preferred the older method of the column for the attack upon cavalry. Finally, the cavalry, at their wits' end to meet the improving tactics of infantry, which was rapidly supplanting it in importance, abjured shock action for

missile action, and armed themselves with pistols so as to be able to shoot down pikemen from a safe distance. This restored to them their old formation in column, for all firing was then done by ranks. The first rank fired and filed away to the rear to reload, the second then fired and did likewise, until the whole of the nine or ten ranks had fired and the first were ready to fire again. The execution done was often remarkably small, for the first thought of many men was, not how to hit their enemy, but how to regain the rear of the column as rapidly as possible.

At about the same time an ingenious Italian bethought him to mount pikemen and musketeers on horses and to employ them as mounted infantry. This he duly did; and thus came into being what were called dragoons, so called after the name of the firearm, the dragon, which they carried. Moreover—what was far more noteworthy—the value of natural cavalry, such as was to hand in Hungary, began to be recognised, and light horse began to receive some notice as being of real value to an army.

While all these changes had been going forward on the Continent, England had been too busy with the Civil Wars of the Roses to make any national military reforms; but to all intents and purposes the man-at-arms was extinct when Henry the Eighth came to the throne. In his stead there had arisen a kind of medium cavalry, called demi-lances, armed apparently with the lance, and lightly armoured. We know little about these demi-lances, which are interesting chiefly as the probable germ of the Horse of later times. The men-at-arms in old days had been expensively mounted, on war-horses imported from Spain and Italy; but now there were nothing but English horses, which, to judge by the wording of several Acts of Parliament, were mostly under fourteen hands high. Far more interesting were some native light horse which went on active service with Henry the Eighth to France in 1544. They were known as the Northern Light Horse, having

been called into existence by the eternal forays carried on by both English and Scots on the Scottish Border. I suspect them to have been as accomplished cattle-stealers as were to be found in Europe, though they were equipped very much as soldiers. They wore an iron cap and a cuirass, carried lance and buckler, or occasionally a bow, and rode nags, by which I suspect is meant ponies of thirteen hands and under. Charles the Fifth saw them in the field, and cried out with delight when they "hurled" up a hill before his eyes; from which I infer that they could gallop on occasion, and possessed sufficient tactical instinct to see at once what was the commanding position on any given field and to occupy it without delay. For with bows they could employ missile as well as shock tactics. Observe that these natural cavalry were trained in the school of cattle-lifting—predatory bands. I think (but probably some of you know better than I) that they have their own breed of ponies on the Border still. It is curious to remark how frequently the wildest parts of England, the mountain-ranges which were the refuge of the lawless and outlawed, retain their own breed of ponies to this day. This, unfortunately, is our only glimpse of the Northern Light Horse in the field.

In this vague, uncertain state our cavalry remained until the Civil War. Englishmen at the beginning of the seventeenth century who wished to learn the art of war went to the battle-ground of Dutch independence in Holland, and brought their knowledge and experience back with them. There Prince Maurice of Nassau assimilated all that was best of all foreign teaching; and it was mainly at his school that Englishmen learned their drill. It is curious to remark how difficult the drill was. The normal strength of a troop was 100 men, who were drawn up in five ranks, with one horse's length—at that time six feet—of interval between man and man, and of distance between rank and rank. To move to a flank the word was, "Right (or left) turn," when every horse was turned to right or left on its own

ground ; and to move to the rear, " Right (or left) about turn." To increase the front for attack, two of the five ranks were moved into the intervals of two more by the word, " To the right (or left), double your ranks," which gave two of the ranks a frontage of forty instead of, as formerly, twenty. Conversely, the front was diminished by the word, " To the right (or left), double your files," which converted the five ranks of twenty into ten ranks of ten, with of course a doubled interval between man and man. If the troop were wheeled entire, the files and ranks were closed until the men were knee to knee and the horses nose to croup. You will notice the awkwardness of the number five for the purpose of doubling ranks, for which reason many preferred six ranks, which for the attack were doubled into three. Indeed, three ranks was the normal number for cavalry till a full century later ; while for infantry, we, who were the first of all nations to adopt double rank, did not abandon the three ranks until about 1780.

It was on this principle that Cromwell's troopers and the whole of the cavalry engaged in the Civil War was drilled, and drilled not for shock but for missile action. A soldier's pocket-book for field service, which was published by a Royalist at the beginning of the war, gives these few exercises that I have mentioned to you, with diagrams, and very little more. They comprehended the whole duty of a cavalry officer. And you will note that the drill is for the troop only. You will look in vain for regimental, much more for brigade drill ; so that we can only guess how in action regiments and still larger bodies were set in motion. I understand that your Commandant has told you a good deal about Cromwell already, so that I shall not say much about him ; though there are a few details which you may not have heard, and which may possibly bear repetition even if you have.

You know that until 1645 the war was a sort of confused scramble between two parties of undisciplined and half-trained men. You know also that Cromwell

was the man who saw that, other things being equal, gentlemen of courage, honour, and resolution would always beat labourers and tapsters and, as he called them, "such low fellows." You know also that he set himself to form and train a regiment which would stand up to the cavaliers, and that at last, after many failures, the Parliamentary party decided, at Sir William Waller's instance, to raise a complete force of horse and foot, properly trained and disciplined and regularly paid. Eleven regiments of Horse were therefore formed, each of six troops of 100 men apiece; and they were armed, at any rate so far as was possible, with iron helmet, cuirass, a brace of pistols, and a sword. In the earlier part of the war a great many of the regiments of cavalry had been armed with carbines or short shoulder-firearms (if I may use the expression) of one kind or another; but these were now discarded. There had also been equipped a small number of cuirassiers; that is to say, of men in full armour to the knee, and fitted from the knee downward with enormous boots, thick enough to turn any but a really fresh bullet. This full armour was also discarded, probably because it was too expensive to provide, though no doubt many officers retained it. But it may be said that with the Civil War the man-at-arms vanished completely; even as his lance had already vanished before him, not to return again until 1823. Helmet and cuirass were the defensive armament, pistols and sword the offensive. The officers of each troop were of course captain, lieutenant, and cornet; and, for administrative purposes, the troop was separated into three divisions, one to each of the three officers, with a corporal apiece (there were no sergeants in the Horse) for non-commissioned officers. Each troop possessed also a trumpeter.

In action the attack was delivered in three ranks, the men being closed up knee to knee, at a rapid trot, with pistols; and when the pistols were empty the men fell to work with their swords. The essence of Cromwell's discipline was that the men should hold

their fire till within close range, so that it should be effective; and hence the limitation of the speed to the trot. I can hardly doubt myself that the men instinctively steadied their horses when they fired, and I find it difficult to believe that troopers as well disciplined with the lance would not have overthrown them by charging at the gallop. As a matter of fact, there was a small body of lancers at Marston Moor who galloped through everything. However, the lance was not on that account restored, and the orders given, even by the most impetuous of Cromwell's officers — Thomas Morgan—were that no man should fire until he came within a horse's length of the enemy, then throw his empty pistols in his opponent's face, and so strike in with the sword. You will find that the French cavalry went through these same antics with their pistols when they charged our infantry at Dettingen in 1742. However, a fight was rarely settled with the pistol only; and no doubt when men drew their swords they quickened their speed, especially if their fire had made a gap into which they could ride. I find also that sometimes the cavalry worked in double rank only; while, on the contrary, on at least one occasion a leader doubled the depth of his column just before attack, and prevailed entirely by weight and shock. We may say, therefore, that Cromwell's troopers practically were their own horse-artillery, and combined shock action with missile action, not without success.

The New Model Army also included a regiment of ten companies of dragoons, in all 1000 strong. These were armed with musket and sword, and were mounted on inferior horses, or rather ponies; for the horses, even of the Horse proper, did not exceed fifteen hands. Yet they did excellent work on many occasions. I must mention that they dismounted the whole of their men, or, at any rate, nine out of ten. The horses were linked; and one man, often (so to speak) an eleventh man, specially kept for the purpose, was told off to look after every ten of them. At

Naseby the dragoons lined a hedge on the flank of the right wing of the Royalists and harassed their cavalry with musketry while it advanced; remounting at the close of the day to charge the broken infantry with the sword. It is interesting to find them acting as cavalry on that day, for their work was strictly that of mounted infantry—to move forward, for instance, to secure a defile or a bridge, and, it seems also, to do most of the outpost-work of the Army. This last was a task which should have fallen by right upon the light dragoons, had there been such troops, which, except in name, there were not. It is very singular, as an instance of the way in which history repeats itself, that at the end of Cromwell's Irish campaign, when regular operations had given place to the hunting down of scattered parties, it was found necessary to serve out muskets or firelocks to the Horse, and to convert them for a time into mounted infantry.

The New Model Army, as you are aware, was disbanded at the Restoration, with the exception of one regiment of foot; though a regiment of Horse, the Blues, was made up from the discharged troopers. The Life Guards were a royal bodyguard which I cannot take very seriously as soldiers until they were converted from troops into regiments more than a century later. It so happened that George Monk, Duke of Albemarle, was strongly in favour of a larger firearm than the pistol for cavalry, and he therefore armed both the Blues and the Life Guards with carbines. Nevertheless, bear in mind that the Blues were Horse, not dragoons. They were the First Horse, a very different thing to the Life Guards. Though now part of the Household Cavalry, they were not originally treated as such, and consequently saw infinitely more service than the Life Guards.

Very soon after the Restoration there was raised the first regiment of dragoons—the Royals—for the colonial garrison of Tangier, which was part of the Queen's dowry. It is not very generally known that

in King Charles the Second's time the Army had to find a Mediterranean garrison, Tangier; an Indian garrison at Bombay; a Colonial garrison in the temperate zone at New York, and another in the tropical zone at St. Kitts. But the only station abroad where cavalry was quartered was Tangier, and Tangier was given up before the accession of King James the Second. We have to move forward a full century before we find British cavalry in permanent use for foreign garrisons, when in 1781 the Nineteenth Light Dragoons were raised for India, and in 1792 the Twentieth, or Jamaica, Light Dragoons for Jamaica.

At the beginning of King James the Second's reign—that is to say, in 1685—the cavalry was very materially increased by the addition of three regiments of dragoons (the Greys, Third and Fourth Hussars), and by six regiments of horse, then known as the Second to the Seventh Horse, now as the First to the Sixth Dragoon Guards. The horse retained their cuirasses (though a hat, with an iron skull-cap beneath it, replaced the iron helmet), pistols, sword, and carbine, which last was slung over the back, and was intended for use from the saddle. As you see, the craze for missile action was still strong. The horses of the Horse were of a peculiar breed, all of them black, and, to judge by the pictures of them, as heavy, underbred brutes as a man could wish to see. Meanwhile, note the futility of giving a man a carbine and requiring him to hold it to the convex surface of a cuirass.

The dragoons remained much as before—mounted infantry without defensive armour, and with the firelock for their principal weapon. They were, however, showing signs of drawing closer to the Horse in more than one respect. The junior subaltern was known as a cornet instead of an ensign, and there seemed to be considerable doubt whether the tactical unit of the regiment should be called a troop or a company. Moreover, twelve men of each troop, besides the non-commissioned officers, were armed with halberd and pistol—a very

curious combination of mounted and dismounted equipment. There was, however, one very important change which came over the infantry, and through them to the dragoons, at this period—namely, the invention of the bayonet, which practically combined the pikeman and the musketeer into a single man with a single weapon. Bayonets were served out to the dragoons in 1672; and in 1687 buckets for their muskets were added in lieu of slings, which, I suspect, gave the men rather fuller play for their sword-arms. From the moment when the bayonet was introduced, the pike began to disappear, the proportion of pikes dwindled and dwindled to a minute body, which was known as the *piquet*, and was retained, so far as I can gather, chiefly as a ceremonial guard for the colours. Finally, at the beginning of Marlborough's wars, the pike disappeared altogether, leaving only the word *picquet* behind.

Another innovation of this period was the institution of horse-grenadiers, provided, like the foot-grenadiers, with hand-grenades and matches. In the foot, and presumably also among the mounted troops, the tallest and strongest men were selected for grenadiers, as being naturally able to throw a grenade farther than other men. Grenadiers carried also a hatchet, to enable them to hew down palisades in the storm of a fortress; and to allow them to sling their muskets easily, without knocking off their three-cornered hats, they were provided with the peculiar mitre-caps with which you are familiar in pictures. The horse-grenadiers were therefore simply another form of dragoon, and the three troops formed of them were attached to the three troops of Life Guards. It is, however, noticeable that the Greys for a long time wore grenadier caps, which makes me suspect that they may have had more to do with grenades than other regiments. Possibly some officer of the Greys can enlighten you upon this point.

We are now arrived at the period of Marlborough's

wars, upon which I fancy that your Commandant has already had much to say to you. You know what work was done by our cavalry in those famous campaigns. You know, I hope, how at the storming of the Schellenberg the dragoons were dismounted to support the assault of the infantry ; you know of the great attack in which the Horse took part at Blenheim ; and you know of the tremendous energy with which the British Horse and dragoons took up the pursuit after Ramillies. Lastly, you know that, whereas the French still stuck in great measure to the pernicious practice of firing their carbines from the saddle, Marlborough attacked always with the sword, and defeated missile action by shock action. It is somewhat curious that we find Marlborough procuring in 1707 the equipment of the cavalry with a breast-piece ; which seems to point to the fact that it entered upon the war at its inception without defensive armour. It is so extremely difficult to follow the various changes, owing to the want of system in the Army and in its records at that time, that I really cannot say how or when the defensive armour came to be discarded. Possibly it was all worn out in the previous campaigns of King William, and not replaced ; but at any rate Marlborough insisted that it must be provided anew. Notice the grim humour with which he furnished breast-pieces only, so that men should have no protection if they turned their backs.

After the close of Marlborough's wars, there came a long period of peace ; and this may be the best time to say a few words about the condition of the Army in time of peace. By the year 1715 our cavalry had grown to eight regiments of Horse—namely, the Blues, and the seven regiments now called the Dragoon Guards—and fourteen of dragoons, of which the Ninth to the Fourteenth had been raised in consequence of the Scottish rebellion of that same year, 1715. Now you must remember that until 1707 there were three separate establishments for the three kingdoms, and after 1707 two separate establishments—the British and the Irish.

The Scottish regiments of cavalry among these were, as you doubtless know, the Greys and Seventh Dragoons (now Hussars); the Irish were the Fifth Horse (now the Fourth Dragoon Guards), the Fifth Dragoons, the Inniskillings, and Eighth Dragoons (now Hussars). The regular establishment of a cavalry regiment, whether Horse or dragoons, was six troops, excepting the Blues and Second Horse or King's Dragoon Guards, each of which had nine troops. We may leave the Scottish establishment alone, and confine ourselves to the period after 1707, when there were only a British and an Irish establishment. These, you must understand, were totally distinct. Each had its own Sovereign (the Lord-Lieutenant exercising regal power in Ireland), its own Commander-in-Chief, its own War Office, its own Paymaster-General, its own Board of Ordnance, its own Corps of Artillery, its own establishment for the strength of regiments, and even its own rates of pay. For Ireland in the eighteenth century was the victualling-yard of the world, and, since provisions were cheaper, the pay was lower than in Britain. In Ireland very early the troops were put into barracks—scattered barracks, it is true, but still barracks; and the Irish establishment being fixed in 1689 at 12,000 men, it was the practice, in order to save expense to England, to cram into it as many regiments, or rather skeletons of regiments, as could be comprehended in that number. Above all, partly for purposes of police, partly for economy, the garrison included a very large proportion of cavalry. From 1720 onwards, four regiments of Horse and six out of the fourteen regiments of dragoons were quartered in Ireland, often with establishments as low as thirty men in a troop. Indeed, four of the regiments of Horse, now Dragoon Guards, were quartered in Ireland for so long that they were known as the Irish Horse. There vegetating in tiny detachments, under imperfect supervision and subject to all the many jobberies and rascalities which disgraced our government of Ireland, they became absolutely useless, if not

indeed dangerous. If any of those four regiments still by chance bear not the best of names, it is that long sojourn in Ireland which has done the mischief.

In England the prejudice of the politician against barracks absolutely forbade their construction. Hence the troops were quartered in alehouses; and, lest any one place should take it as a hardship to have many troops quartered upon it, the regiments were dispersed in all directions. I have found the nine troops of the King's Dragoon Guards quartered in nine different villages, as they were then—places like Maidenhead, Kingston, Reading, and so forth. You may therefore judge of the difficulty of keeping any regiment in order.

Then you must remember that of course the whole Army was ruled by the purchase-system, which had come through the modelling of regiments upon the mercenary bands which taught Europe the new art of war in the fifteenth century. These bands were raised and equipped by syndicates, much like a privateer or a pirate ship. The different partners contributed so much to the capital, and took a proportionate share of the profits. Hence the largest shareholders tended to become the senior officers, and any shareholder who wearied of his venture sold his share bodily, and his place with it. That was how a commission became an investment. The profits, of course, were plunder and prize-money, so that the whole system was adapted for war only and not in the least for peace. However, there it was, and the worst effect of it was upon discipline; for, if a man had bought his troop or his regiment, it was his; and it was hard to say why he should not do what he liked with his own. Hence it was extremely difficult to make slack officers do their work, and still more difficult to get rid of the inefficient.

As to the pay of the men, it is extremely difficult to say what it actually was, though nominally the pay of a private of Horse was 2s. 6d. a day, and of a dragoon 1s. 9d. in England and 1s. 4d. in Ireland. But from this 1s. 9d. was stopped 5 per cent for the Paymaster-

General, 4d. a day for clothing[1] (out of which the colonel was expected to make a profit), 6d. for food, 6d. more for hay and straw, 2½d. for corn, a halfpenny for the farrier, and a penny for the riding-master. In summer-time the dragoon-horses were turned out to grass, and the saving thereby effected, called grass-money, went to the purchase of necessaries. Altogether, when the man and his horse had been fed and clothed and the farrier had been paid, there remained, or was supposed to remain, 6d. a week for the renewal of shoes, stockings, and gaiters, for medicines, shaving, repair of arms, and losses by exchange in the remittance of money. In a word, the dragoon never saw a penny of it. In fact, the man's pay was not wages. It was meant to put him, fed and clothed, into the field, and to pay for a good deal of the general and regimental service as well. The officer's pay was simply interest on the money sunk in his commission. As to the arrangements for remounts, recruits, and other expenses of the troop,—for everything, down to the muster-rolls, was done rather by troops than by regiments,—I should only bewilder you if I tried to explain them; and, indeed, so complicated are they that I am not sure that I understand all of them myself. The accounts of all these sums were kept by the regimental agent, originally the colonel's clerk, but soon practically the regimental banker. If the colonel mismanaged his regimental affairs, or, worse still, if the agent failed, both of which accidents occasionally happened, then there was indescribable trouble and confusion. Sometimes the regiment had to go short of two or three cornets, assigning their pay to the creditors until the debt was paid off. Very early in the eighteenth century, colonelcies became rewards for political service rather than active appointments for deserving officers, — the reward being the profit from clothing the men, — and then often a regiment was saddled for years with a lunatic or some miserable old dotard

[1] The stoppage was larger for cavalry than infantry, because the cavalry received a cloak and horse-furniture.

wholly unfitted for any duty whatever, whether military or civil.

As to the training of the men, it varied in every regiment; but the drill began early in the eighteenth century to take the modern form of manœuvring by the wheel of small divisions instead of by the turning of individual men and horses upon their own ground. The formation in triple rank was preserved. There was no proper riding-school, though during "grass-time," there was a stoppage of a penny a day for a riding-master, who made the men career round him in a circle; but in those days the men who could not ride more or less were few. The principal training of the horse seems, at any rate in George the Second's time, to have consisted in the cropping of his ears, and in the docking of his tail to a length of two inches or less. Dragoons, of course, were exercised on foot as well as on horseback by signal of drum, the trumpet being confined to the Horse. Sword-exercise there was none. The most noteworthy point in the cavalry, however, in those days as in these, was that they obtained a very superior class of recruit. I cannot find that the men were better off in any way than the infantry in the matter of money, but the traditions of the old days, when a trooper brought his own horse with him to the regiment, remained then as they remain now; and farmers, then as now, who would have wept to see a son enlist in the Foot Guards felt that he did not lower himself by becoming a dragoon, still less by taking service as a trooper of Horse.

The thirty years of peace were broken by war at first with Spain and then with France—the campaigns that are associated with the names of Dettingen and Fontenoy. You know, no doubt, how the Third Hussars—Dragoons, as they then were—covered themselves with glory at Dettingen, and how the cavalry covered the retreat at Fontenoy. You know too, I hope, of the charge of the Greys, Inniskillings, and Cumberland's Dragoons, by which Ligonier saved the

infantry at Lauffeld. Ligonier always seems to me to have been one of our few great cavalry-officers, though, of course, he was a Frenchman and not an Englishman by birth. But the most interesting point for us at present is the Duke of Cumberland's Dragoons, raised originally to quell the Scottish rebellion of 1745, and found so useful that they were continued in existence and sent to Flanders. They were the first light dragoons ever known in our service, and, though they were disbanded at the end of the war, their creation marks an epoch in the history of our cavalry.

I do not know if you are aware of the position which light troops held in an army of those days. Every army, on taking the field, drew up what was called an Order of Battle, in which the place of every brigade and regiment was fixed in two lines, which were divided into right wing and left wing. In this Order of Battle appeared the horse, heavy dragoons, and heavy infantry, which thus gained the name of troops of the Line of Battle. Light troops, both infantry and cavalry, were not troops of the Line, and, if they appeared in the Order of Battle at all, appeared by themselves in rear of both lines. The Austrian armies always brought with them a host of savage creatures called Pandours, Croats, Crabbates, Tolpatches, and what not, who were never reckoned at all in the strength of the field-force. They were the irregulars—a wild, thieving, plundering, murdering lot of scoundrels, of little use for fighting, but invaluable for purposes of reconnaissance, for outposts, screens, ambuscades, and what was known at large as the *petite guerre* or little war. Within the circle of these ruffians the troops of the Line marched in dignified security against the day of a general action; and hence the extremely inadequate instruction which you will find in old books as to outposts, scouting, and reconnaissance. In the soldier's pocket-book of the Civil War, there is just a mention of the fact that vedettes should be posted in pairs, but of reconnaissance not a word. In the

Civil War the dragoons appear to have done all this work; in Henry the Eighth's time the Northern Light Horse did it; in earlier times, I strongly suspect that the hobelars and mounted archers did it, though nothing is said about them. But bear in mind that a self-respecting officer of the cavalry of the Line was above such matters as outposts. That was the business of the light troops or irregulars. As a matter of fact, the first regular light troops that we ever employed were infantry —Highlanders brought to the Low Countries, at Lord Stair's request, for this very war of 1742. They were employed on precisely the same footing under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick in 1759-1763. I never hear Highlanders talking about "shoulder to shoulder" and the rest of it, without feeling inclined to tell them that they began life as irregular troops and were the first light infantry ever known in our Army; and that, if they had managed their affairs properly, they might have monopolised that splendid service and gained an even greater name, if possible, than they now enjoy.

The next war on the Continent of Europe made the need for light cavalry more urgent, and in 1759 there was raised that very famous regiment, Eliott's Light Dragoons, the Fifteenth Hussars. You remember how they first made their name at Emsdorff in company with a regiment of Prussian hussars and some more irregulars in the following year, by hunting an unfortunate detachment of French infantry for twenty miles, charging whenever they saw a chance, and finally capturing 2600 of them in a body. But their casualties—125 men and 168 horses—showed that they did not really know their business as light troops; for the hussars did not lose a man nor a horse, and the other mounted irregulars only twenty-three men and horses. However, it must be confessed that the duty required of them on that day was that which they so gallantly performed—a succession of bold charges executed with the greatest intrepidity—though the precedent was not quite a wholesome one for the future

of the British light dragoons. The year 1760 saw the creation of six more regiments on the model of the Fifteenth, of which the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Lancers still survive. In fact, the star of the old heavy Horse was beginning to pale rapidly. In 1746 the troops of Life Guards were reduced from four to two, and the Second, Third, and Fourth Horse were turned into the First, Second, and Third Dragoon Guards. "Dragoons are now the mode," wrote Ligonier sarcastically, "so I doubt not that Ireland will also petition for the abolition of the jack-boot." The jack-boot was the mark of the Horse, being an article too heavy for men who might be called upon to fight on foot.

There was much smartness in these light dragoons. They wore a helmet with all kinds of adornments, and their horses were "of the nag or hunter kind," with nag-tails, contrasting much with the full tail, which had by that time become the rule for the heavies. Their arms were carbine, bayonet, pistol, and sword ; their holsters were filled up with entrenching tools ; and yet, miraculous to say, their saddlery was lighter than that of other regiments. They received special training in horse-manship, and were taught to fire from the saddle even at the gallop, which cannot, I think, have been very profitable. But in scouting, reconnaissance, and the true work of the hussar they never received any instruction whatever.

Our next great war, curiously enough, was one in which the true light dragoon, perfectly trained, would have been invaluable. This was the American War of Independence, which bears a singularly close resemblance to the late war in South Africa—a war almost exclusively of missile action. Two regiments of light dragoons, the Sixteenth and Seventeenth, were sent out there, and were very frequently engaged ; but there was not a rifle in the whole of the British Army when the war began, whereas there were plenty in the hands of the Americans, who understood perfectly how to use them. They picked off eighty officers, for instance, at

Bunker's Hill, where we had only 2000 men engaged. Before the war was over, every battalion of infantry organised a company of riflemen for itself; and in the dearth of light dragoons several irregular corps of cavalry were organised, the most famous of which were Tarleton's and Simcoe's. The Sixteenth went home early in the war. The Seventeenth was mostly kept patrolling about the very extensive lines around the base at New York; but one troop was attached to Tarleton's Legion. This latter corps was composed of some of the greatest ruffians unhung; and when at last a really bad day came, the Seventeenth alone of Tarleton's mounted troops stood by him to the end. Both Tarleton and Simcoe have left accounts of their actions behind them. Tarleton, who was a flashy, self-advertising sort of man, must not be too implicitly trusted, for I have caught him lying more than once; but he certainly made some extraordinary marches with small columns and achieved some remarkable successes. Simcoe was a far better and sounder officer; and he has left on record how he trained his light troops, both horse and foot, until he could beat the guerilla leaders at their own game. His book, unfortunately, is extremely rare, and the best edition of it absolutely prohibitory in price. It has sometimes seemed to me a pity that it has not been reprinted; for, though his actions are minute in scale, I should fancy that they are still full of instruction.

The whole of this training, however, was thrown away, as were also several excellent hints as to mounted infantry, drawn up some years earlier by Colonel Bouquet of the Sixtieth Foot for the training of light troops, both mounted and dismounted. The British infantry, trained in the American school, did once meet a very superior number of French, trained in the old school, in St. Lucia in 1778, and, though outnumbered by nearly ten to one, made absolute havoc of them. But the whole of this experience was lost by the infantry before the next war; and the cavalry, unfortunately, was never reached by it at all.

It says something for the independence of the authorities at home, that they declined altogether to be governed by the teaching of the American War in the matter of the cavalry. For the most part it had been a war of mounted infantry, so far as mounted troops were concerned at all, though there had been some very fierce meetings of small bodies of cavalry—one to two hundred men—with the sword ; and there was one American officer—Washington, a kinsman of the great George—who had a very quick and keen eye for the moment to charge. This Washington very nearly turned one serious action into a great defeat for us, and quite succeeded at Cowpens in annihilating one of Tarleton's columns, by well-timed attacks upon infantry with the sword. What knowledge the rulers at the Horse Guards may have possessed of these matters, and whether or not they sought counsel of Simcoe, Tarleton, or any officers of the Seventeenth, we do not know. All that is certain is that, on the one hand, the four surviving regiments of horse—the Irish Horse already referred to—were changed into dragoons, with the names of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Dragoon Guards. On the other hand, the musket was taken away from the heavy dragoons, and a carbine substituted for it. Moreover, the light dragoons were now transformed into a peculiar people. Their clothing was changed from scarlet to blue ; a great comb of fur was added to their leathern helmets, which distinguished their head-dress more than ever from that of the rest of the Army ; and finally, though they retained their carbines, they gave up their bayonets. Before the American War, Eliott and Burgoyne, who had raised the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Light Dragoons, had tried to obtain rifled carbines for the whole of the light dragoons, and had managed to find an extremely efficient weapon, accurate up to the range of 500 yards. If such a carbine had been adopted and the men properly trained in the use of it, the results upon the development of the light dragoons might have been

far-reaching; but unfortunately then, as too often now, prejudice was too strong in the service to permit of a change so revolutionary. The rifle, which, as I have told you, had been in use in every battalion engaged in the American campaigns, was not adopted, even for the infantry, until the great war with France had been raging for some years, and then at first only on a small scale for a regiment of militia. A great deal is said, and not without reason, of the training of the Light Division (which included, of course, the new regiment now called the Rifle Brigade) by Sir John Moore in 1804. But few seem to be aware that this training was only a reminiscence of that which not three regiments only, but a great many regiments, had undergone in the stern school of active service between 1775 and 1781. But though the light infantry was at last properly trained, no such duty was undertaken for the cavalry. Simcoe, if permitted, could have made the British light dragoons the most perfect light cavalry in Europe. There was yet another officer, one Colonel Money, of whom I shall have more to say in my next lecture, whose thoughts were so clear, whose ideas were so sound, and whose experience was so great, that probably he could not only have trained the men as well as Simcoe, but could have composed a manual for light cavalry which would have been as valuable to-day as one hundred years ago. It is really almost a tragedy that such an opportunity should have been lost, and that this School of Cavalry, established in 1903, should be necessary now to give instruction which, as I believe, ought in great measure to have been at the fingers' ends of every light cavalry officer for a century.

Thus the number of light dragoon regiments was increased between 1775 and 1783 to thirteen; the Twelfth having become light dragoons in 1768, the Fourteenth in 1775-76, the Seventh, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth in 1783. Yet they were trained only to perform pretty evolutions at the gallop, which they did exceedingly well, and to charge, in

spite of Lord Amherst's orders to the contrary, at the speed of forty miles an hour, without a thought of a lesson in rallying at the end.

Who was responsible for all this? I fear that the prejudices of officers themselves must necessarily fix upon them a large measure of the blame. The caprices of inspecting generals and the fancies of some members of the Royal Family were also, I think, answerable, at any rate in part, for some of this folly. But in truth, by the neglect of Ministers between 1783 and 1793 the entire Army—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—became greatly demoralised. The men were so miserably paid that they deserted by hundreds, literally to avoid death by starvation; but not all the representations of officers could induce Pitt to do anything for them. Moreover, the Adjutant-General declared the case of subalterns of dragoons to be even more distressing than that of the men. Their pay was not enough to defray the cost of keeping their servants and their horses, and the result was that cornetcies were a drug in the market. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the cavalry should have remained stagnant. Remember that probably not a single regiment had its six troops quartered together; and that one principal duty of light dragoons was to act in concert with the Custom-house officers to prevent smuggling, which meant the scattering of tiny detachments in all directions. A colonel had little chance of making anything of his regiment; and even if he had the chance he had hardly the heart, with his men righteously discontented, his subalterns dropping off one by one, unable to bear the cost of serving, and no new cornets coming to take their place. I have written elsewhere my opinion, whatever it may be worth, upon Pitt's treatment of the Army at this period, so I shall not repeat it now. In my next lecture I hope to show you how the cavalry, thus neglected by Ministers, endured the ordeal of active service at the opening of the great war with France.

(*Cavalry School, November* 23, 1904)

IV

GENTLEMEN—In the present lecture I propose to tell you something about the work done by our cavalry in the field between 1793 and 1802; that is to say, during the first stage of the great war of the French Revolution, which ended at the peace of Amiens. Our military history during that period is remarkably, I might say scandalously, ill known to us. I do not believe that there is one officer in a hundred who could give the names of more than two of the actions fought by our Army during those years. One of them is Aboukir, in 1801; and the other is the cavalry action of Villers-en-Cauchies, fought on the 24th of April 1794. Villers-en-Cauchies lies about six miles north-north-east of Cambrai, on the northern frontier of France. What were the Fifteenth Hussars doing there? The answer to that question involves a very brief review of certain points of general history; and you must be good enough to bear with me while I attempt to give it to you. If the officers of the Army would master the events and circumstances which at different times have called their regiments into the field, they would know far more of the history of the Empire than the majority of Cabinet Ministers.

You know something about the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. Without attempting to enumerate the thousand complex causes which brought it about, let me mention the two final and immediate causes. These were famine, due to a terrific storm which had ruined the harvest of 1788, and mutiny and

disaffection in the army. The French army was a strictly monarchical institution, and the reverence for the King among the officers amounted almost to a superstition. The Revolutionists therefore set to work to undermine all discipline among the men ; and, as they gradually gained the upper hand in the Government of France, they succeeded in destroying it completely. Equality, they said, was incompatible with military discipline, which was a matter only for slaves. At the same time, being full of cant phrases, they asserted the doctrine not only of equality of men, but of community of goods, and tried to carry this also into effect. In fact, they tried at one moment to deal, by means of a hastily contrived and bureaucratic organisation, with the transport and supply necessary for the feeding of twenty-five millions of people. The result was that all trade and business came to a standstill, and that the whole country became very poor, and very hungry. Thousands, in fact, died of starvation ; and riots, brigandage, and practically civil war reigned far and wide over France, wholly unchecked, because, the army having been destroyed, there was no force to check it. Having brought France into this appalling confusion, the shallow upstarts who were in power could think of no way of extricating her but by war. The neighbouring states of Austria and Germany had long been extremely uneasy over the spread of the doctrines of general equality and community of goods, to say nothing of the peril of a nation of madmen let loose on the world. A pretext for war with Austria was therefore easily found ; and France, with no more than an undisciplined rabble for army, boldly invaded Belgium (which was then known as the Austrian Netherlands) in April 1792. What she really wanted was the harvest of Belgium, and the money both of Belgium and of Holland ; but her troops ran screaming away at the firing of the first shot, crying out "Treason," and indemnified themselves by killing their own generals. On the other hand, an invasion

of France by the Austrians and Prussians in the summer of the same year was an abject failure, owing to the jealousy of these two powers; and in November the French again invaded Belgium with a second raw army. With a superiority of two to one in numbers, they forced the Austrians to retire from the country after the action of Jemappes; and upon that retirement the Belgians, deceived by the French doctrines and promises of liberty and so forth, welcomed the French as their deliverers.

The French Government then fastened greedy eyes upon Holland, one of the richest countries in the world, but hesitated to invade it from fear of England. The integrity of Holland had been the cardinal point of English Continental policy for more than a century; and, to secure the integrity of Holland, it was essential that a barrier should be interposed between her and France. The possession of Belgium by Austria had ensured the existence of that barrier for eighty years, and had secured likewise what was practically the most important point in England's scheme of national defence—namely, that Antwerp should not be in the possession of a great maritime power. Pitt, in spite of a most earnest desire to maintain peace, or at any rate to keep England clear of the quarrels on the Continent, found himself unable to consent to the absorption of Belgium by France; and England was bound by treaty to assist Holland in case of invasion. The matter was finally settled by a declaration of war by France against England in February 1793.

It therefore fell to Pitt to formulate a military policy for England in this contest with France. It so happened that the first collision of the Revolutionary doctrines with English interests had taken place not in Europe but in the West Indies. The doctrine of the equality of all men, if logically applied, of course made the black man as good as the white; and the fanatics in Paris, by endeavouring to apply them, had stirred up in all the French West Indies a savage insurrection of

black and coloured against white, accompanied by outrages and horrors unspeakable. The white planters, who were chiefly Royalists, thereupon negotiated secretly with the British Government to place the French islands under British protection. These islands were, as I suppose you know, Martinique and Guadeloupe to windward, and Haiti to leeward ; the latter consisting of about 5000 square miles of the western end of the island of St. Domingo. This tract included some of the richest land in the world, with excellent communications by water and a produce worth seven millions sterling annually. The English planters were of course eager for the removal of these formidable competitors in their trade, for the occupation of the ports from which French privateers preyed upon their ships, and above all for the reduction of the blacks to their old subjection and slavery. The West India merchants were a power in Parliament from their enormous wealth,—for the West Indies were worth more than the East in those days,—and their trade was an important consideration to Pitt, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as Prime Minister. Pitt saw clearly enough that France was sinking into hopeless and unparalleled financial confusion, and made up his mind that no country could fight when bankrupt. England therefore needed only to cut off what was left of French colonial trade, already enormously damaged by the negro insurrection, and that would be the finishing stroke. France would be paralysed by want of money within a year. Moreover, the occupation of the French West Indies would look well in the Gazette, and show the people that they were getting value for their money. This, then, was Pitt's military policy—to bring France to her knees by striking at her colonial trade. It was a fatally mistaken policy, which paralysed the arm of England, though with little damage to France, during the first period of the war.

But meanwhile Pitt discovered to his horror that the Dutch, deceived, like the Belgians, by fair French

promises, were inclined to welcome the French rather than the contrary; while their sovereign, the Stadtholder, was too inert and too stupid to take any line of his own in stirring up the national feeling. Our Ambassador at the Hague entreated that the Duke of York should be sent over with a few troops, just to give the Stadtholder a little encouragement and to form a rallying-point for the Dutch nation. On the morning, therefore, of the 20th of February 1793 the seven battalions of Guards were paraded, and volunteers were called for to make up three respectable battalions. Five days later the three were marched to Gravesend, embarked upon transports too small to carry above two-thirds of their number in safety, with no transport, no medical stores, and no reserve of ammunition. The weather being fine, they fortunately reached the Scheldt in safety; for if a gale had come on and the ships had been battened down, the men would have been suffocated. In the course of the next month three battalions of the Line under General Ralph Abercromby were sent to join them; and meanwhile the aspect of affairs suddenly changed. The Austrians, who had retired to the east bank of the Meuse from Belgium, suddenly recrossed the river in force, sent the French flying in all directions, and recovered the country almost at a blow. Then the British Government, thinking that it might as well help Austria to invade France, called up a large force of Hanoverians and Hessians in order to make up a respectable corps for the Duke of York, and, having no more British infantry to send, decided to furnish at any rate a decent contingent of cavalry. The regiments selected for service were the Blues, King's Dragoon Guards, Bays, and Third Dragoon Guards, brigaded as the first brigade under Major-General Harcourt of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons; the Union brigade under Major-General Mansel of the Third Dragoon Guards; and the Seventh, Eleventh, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Light Dragoons under Major-General Ralph Dundas of the Eleventh. With the exception of the King's

Dragoon Guards, which put six out of its nine troops into the field, these regiments could none of them produce more than four troops apiece ; and, so far as I can ascertain, the strength of the entire force did not exceed at the outside 2500 of all ranks. Taking two troops to a squadron, the three brigades had twenty-three squadrons, which would give an average of little more than 100 men to a squadron, or 200 to a regiment. Such was the deplorable result of low establishments and insufficient pay ; and, in consequence of the starvation of the subalterns, of which I told you in my last lecture, it was necessary to offer cornetcies, not only to half-pay cornets and ensigns on very favourable terms, but even to quartermasters *gratis*. These three brigades, which were called a division, but were soon broken up, embarked in the course of May and June 1793.

With the campaign of 1793 I shall concern myself little. The Allies ought to have marched straight upon Paris ; but the Austrians insisted upon wasting their time in petty sieges of French fortresses, while the British Government, working for votes and not for victories, insisted upon the siege of Dunkirk, wishing to have the fortress as a prize to brandish before the electors. The siege of Dunkirk was a failure, and that failure wrecked the entire campaign. The most noticeable point is that the Austrians insisted upon conducting the war upon what is called the cordon-system ; that is to say, by covering every possible access to the theatre of war with some small body of troops, as if to keep out contraband goods or the plague. They would fritter away two-thirds of their force over a front of sixty or seventy miles, and then complain that they had very few left for offensive operations. Thus they simply invited the destruction of their army, in detail, by a force of inferior strength ; and the French were in greatly superior strength. The quality of the French troops was indeed bad, for indiscipline was still encouraged by the Revolutionary Government

at Paris, which dreaded lest some successful general with an obedient force at his back should seize supreme power. This, as you know, was what actually happened. France had to choose between rejecting discipline, which signified conquest by a foreign power, and accepting discipline, which placed the army in command of the nation. She chose the latter; but in 1793 and 1794 she was still hesitating. Her troops therefore were bad, but they had developed their own system of tactics already. The brave and enterprising men ran forward, took cover, and tried to shoot as many of the enemy as they could without being shot themselves; and if the enemy showed signs of wavering, the rest rushed forward in a savage, tumultuary mass with the bayonet, and with such dash that they were not always easily stopped. Above all, these Frenchmen knew that the enemy was in their country, and that they could not go wrong in killing even a single man, if they had the opportunity; and their commanders, like wise men, constantly engaged them in little skirmishes to train them. Thus the work of outposts and so forth was very heavy, and since such work was supposed to be the function of light troops, the demand for such troops was very great. The Austrians had a good number, both horse and foot, chiefly Bosnians—savage, undisciplined devils, who would murder even the vedettes of their own side for plunder. The Austrian generals never dared go among them without an escort; so you may imagine that they were not very desirable allies. On the other hand, the Austrian hussars were excellent. The British had no such light troops, and their commanders made desperate efforts to supply them by raising levies of foreigners, Germans or French Royalists. For the British light dragoons, I am sorry to say, were absolutely useless for outpost work. They could charge, and they could and did harry beaten troops effectively; but at the opening of the campaign, and even later, a Prussian hussar accompanied every British vedette, and a Prussian non-commissioned

officer every officer's post, to teach them these elementary duties.

On the other hand, the campaign of 1793 showed where the weakness of the French army lay. Undisciplined infantry cannot face cavalry in the open, and on the 12th of September the Austrian cavalry brought home this lesson to the French in a very terrible fashion. Our own troops were at the moment in Western Flanders, recovering themselves after the failure of the siege of Dunkirk, so that they unfortunately could take no part in the action. The Austrians, for their part, were besieging Le Quesnoy, midway between Cambrai and Maubeuge, both of which fortresses were held by the French. Their covering army was of course thrown out to east and west to guard against any attempt of the French to raise the siege; and about six miles on the direct road from Cambrai to Le Quesnoy, at the village of Villers-en-Cauchies, stood the first of their outposts, thrown forward from another village, Saulzoir, about two miles farther to eastward, on the east side of the little river Selle. The garrison for Saulzoir and Villers-en-Cauchies was five companies of infantry and four squadrons of light cavalry. On the 12th of September, as I have said, a column of 7000 French, chiefly infantry, but with a few cavalry and twenty guns, marched out of Cambrai upon Saulzoir, on their way to Le Quesnoy to raise the siege. This was part of a concerted movement of four different French columns which advanced simultaneously upon the allied posts at Marchiennes, about sixteen miles north of Cambrai; Denain, a few miles to south of Marchiennes; Saulzoir, and the Forest of Mormal. All four columns opened their attack with singular precision at six in the morning; and the outposts at Villers-en-Cauchies, after a stubborn resistance, were forced back. The French then pressed their advance towards Saulzoir, until they found the retreating Austrians joined by three squadrons of hussars from Solesmes, about four miles south of Saulzoir, and

by two squadrons of cuirassiers which had been sent by the commander-in-chief in hot haste from his main body on the Ecaillon, about four miles east of the Selle. The country here is described as a gently undulating plain, without an enclosure of any kind, or any slope that would check a rapid advance of cavalry; and the French Commander, doubtless mistrusting his troops, upon the appearance of the Austrian reinforcements retired northward through Villers-en-Cauchies towards Avesnes-le-Sec. The leader of the Austrians, Prince Hohenlohe, no sooner saw the retrograde movement than he advanced with the whole of his force to the attack. In all, he had nine squadrons,—four of light cavalry, three of hussars, and two of cuirassiers,—making together about 2000 sabres, without a single gun. The French cavalry, even worse trained than the infantry, was broken at the first onset, and galloped wildly back to Cambrai, leaving the infantry to its fate. These now formed themselves into two large squares of unequal size, with their guns in the interval between them. The Austrians promptly attacked on three sides at once, the four squadrons of light cavalry taking the front, the three squadrons of hussars the right flank, and the two squadrons of cuirassiers the left. The French guns opened with grape as they advanced, and the infantry, with a steadiness very creditable to raw troops, held their fire till the Austrians were within forty-five paces; but they checked the squadrons not for a moment. Spurring hard, the cavalry galloped straight into the middle of them, broke up both squares, and captured all the guns. Hundreds of the French threw down their arms to run, but they were cut down in all directions. A few escaped to Avesnes-le-Sec; and there the Austrian commander-in-chief gave the order to sound the rally, and, having got the men together, surrounded the village. Having captured all the fugitives within it, he ordered the pursuit to continue. A few more squadrons now arrived from Douchy, a few miles

farther north, which overtook what was left of the French infantry and cut down or captured nearly all of them. The pursuit was only checked by the guns of the fortress of Bouchain; and by all accounts only 80 of the 7000 Frenchmen returned to Cambrai. 2000 were cut down, and as many more were captured, together with 20 guns, 18 ammunition-waggons, and 3 colours, and the remainder dispersed. The casualties of the Austrians did not exceed 69 men killed and wounded.

In 1794 it was the turn of the British to take part in encounters of the same kind. By the opening of the campaign in that year the cavalry had been increased by the Fifth Dragoon Guards and Carbineers, while the Eighth and Fourteenth Hussars were also embarking or embarked. The Fourth Dragoon Guards ought to have gone also, but it could produce only 140 men, and was in such bad order, having been scattered over Ireland in troops and half-troops for ninety-six consecutive years, that it was unfit to go on service. The remainder were brigaded as follows:—First, Fifth, and Sixth Dragoon Guards (7 squadrons), under General Harcourt; Blues, Third Dragoon Guards, Royals (6 squadrons), under General Mansel; Bays, Greys, and Inniskillings (6 squadrons), under General Laurie; Seventh, Eleventh, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Light Dragoons (8 squadrons), under General Ralph Dundas. The first operation was the siege of Landrecies, and a very pointless and feeble operation too; but we can let that pass at present. The French were, as before, in strong force to the south, with powerful garrisons to east at Avesnes[1] and Maubeuge, and to west at Cambrai; wherefore the army of the British and Austrians, which covered the besieging force, was extended in a huge semicircle about the west, south, and east of Landrecies, in a very close, difficult, and intricate country. The curve that faced westward was assigned to the Duke of York, who accordingly

[1] Not to be confounded with Avesnes-le-Sec.

occupied the ground from the river Selle to the road which runs from Cambrai to Le Quesnoy, where his right rested on the village of Inchy. He faced, as I have said, to westward, looking from the edge of the broken ground over the undulating plain, already described, towards Cambrai.

On the 23rd of April intelligence reached the allies that 15,000 of the enemy had moved out from Cambrai towards the north-east, driving in the outposts on the Lower Selle, apparently in the hope of capturing the Emperor of Austria, who was returning from Brussels to head-quarters. General Otto, on receiving this information at St. Hilaire, between four and five miles north-west of Inchy, started upon a reconnaissance with two squadrons of the British Fifteenth Light Dragoons and two of the Austrian Leopold Hussars, together about 400 sabres, and found the enemy, apparently about 10,000 strong, near Villers-en-Cauchies. Falling back, he sent to the Duke of York for reinforcements, and late at night was joined by Mansel's brigade—Blues, Royals, and Third Dragoon Guards—and by two squadrons of the Austrian Zeschwitz Cuirassiers, eight squadrons in all. Early next morning he again moved northward from St. Hilaire down the valley of the Selle, keeping the Fifteenth and the Leopold Hussars in advance, and the remainder in support. At 7 A.M. the advanced squadrons came upon about thrice their own number of French light cavalry, in a long belt of dwarf coppice near the village of Montrecourt, about two miles east of Villers-en-Cauchies. On being attacked, or rather threatened, on their left flank, the French retired precipitately for a quarter of a mile, when they rallied and withdrew steadily north-westward, covered by a cloud of skirmishers. Finally, they reformed between Villers-en-Cauchies and Avesnes-le-Sec, fronting eastward and masking a force of unknown strength in their rear.

Otto appears to have followed up this body of cavalry very rapidly, for on looking round for his

supporting squadrons he could see them nowhere. He halted his advanced squadrons, but seeing that he had committed them too deeply, assembled the officers and told them briefly that there was nothing for it but to attack. The English and Austrian officers then crossed swords, in pledge that they would charge home; and it was agreed that the British should attack in front, and the Austrians on the left flank of the French, on the side of Avesnes-le-Sec. The Fifteenth, led by Captain Aylett, advanced at a rapid trot, and broke into a gallop about 150 yards from the French cavalry, which, however, did not await the shock, but wheeled outwards, right and left, unmasking a line of French skirmishers and cannon. The guns opened fire before their front was clear, and killed several of their own men. In rear of this artillery were six French battalions, or about 3000 men, massed together in oblong formation, with the front rank kneeling. I fancy myself that, as at Avesnes-le-Sec, there were two squares with the guns in the interval, giving the appearance of a single oblong block.[1] A volley from the eastern face of these squares and a discharge of grape from the guns checked the Fifteenth for a moment; but the officers cheered their men on, and sweeping through the battery they dashed straight upon the infantry. The French stood till the horses were upon them, for Aylett was wounded with the bayonet, and four more officers had their horses wounded under them; but the onset of the dragoons was irresistible. Half of the square—or, as I believe, one of the squares—was dispersed instantly, and the other, after firing a volley, broke up and fled in wild disorder. In rear of the infantry were more French squadrons, upon which those that had retired from the front had reformed, but these had given way before the attack of the Austrian hussars; and for

[1] The best accounts of this action are given by members of the attacking force, who can have had little time for observation before they rode into the middle of the French.

half-a-mile British and Austrians had what Cromwell used to call the "execution" of the French infantry. The friends then parted, the Austrians pursuing south-westward towards Cambrai, while the Fifteenth, now led by Captain Pocklington, took the road from Villers-en-Cauchies to Bouchain, dispersed a long line of fifty guns and their ammunition-waggons that were retreating to that fortress, and hunted them on till the guns on the ramparts opened fire, and a relieving force came out from the gates to save the convoy.

Pocklington now observed other forces of the enemy closing in upon him from every side, and, rallying his squadrons, retired at the trot. The blue uniforms, however, caused the French to mistake them for friends, and it was not until he was close to Villers-en-Cauchies that Pocklington perceived that he was cut off. The enemy was, in fact, established in his front, blocking the road, at a point where it crossed a hollow on a causeway, with infantry and artillery; though to south of Villers-en-Cauchies he could see the red coats of Mansel's brigade. Wheeling about for a moment to check some French who were following him from Bouchain, he wheeled again to his proper front, galloped through the French under a heavy fire of musketry and grape, and safely rejoined his comrades.

But now—I hope that we are all friends here—I fear that I have something unpleasant to narrate. Mansel's brigade had not behaved well, and things had gone much amiss with it. What exactly happened I cannot discover; but it is certain that the whole brigade rode rapidly in the wrong direction for a time, though the Royals rallied directly when called upon, and covered the retreat of the two other regiments. The chief of the Duke of York's staff, Colonel Craig, attributed the fault of the brigade mainly to Mansel, whom he had already reported as unfit for his position; but he added that the troops also were to blame. What is still more curious is that the Third Dragoon Guards

lost 38 men and 46 horses killed, and 9 more men wounded and missing, though the casualties of the Blues and Royals were trifling. In the records of the Third Dragoon Guards these losses are transferred to another day, but they belong, in truth, to this action. What I infer from these meagre facts is this—that Mansel led his brigade to the sound of the guns, after some hesitation and halting for orders, and that, being directed to attack the detachment of the enemy which barred Pocklington's retreat, he contrived, by irresolution and mismanagement, to halt the brigade, or a part of it, under heavy fire, and to throw the whole of it into confusion. The heavy losses of the Third point rather to the probability that they were brought under enfilading fire of the French guns at short range; but this, I admit, is only conjecture. The one thing certain is the lamentable fact that the brigade was mishandled, and that it did not behave as it ought. Meanwhile, it seems to me that Otto's neglect to keep his main body in touch with his advanced squadrons was responsible for much of the mishap. The losses of the French were 800 men killed, 400 wounded, and 3 guns captured, which I presume to have been battalion-guns permanently attached to the infantry, as was the fashion in those days. Had Mansel's brigade been ready to support the attack of the advanced squadrons, Otto would have captured the whole of the French artillery, and probably annihilated the French force that had moved out from Cambrai. The casualties of the Fifteenth were 31 men and 37 horses killed and wounded; those of the Leopold Hussars 10 men and 11 horses killed and wounded, and the same number missing.[1]

[1] It may not be amiss to correct a slight error into which Sir Evelyn Wood has fallen in his account of the action, through too ready acceptance of the records of the Fifteenth Hussars. These explain the fact that the number of the French cut down was large and the number of prisoners small, by quoting the order of the French Convention that no quarter was to be given to the British. But this order was not issued until the 26th of May,

The occurrences of the day, of course, roused much bad blood, and there was much unpleasant talk of Mansel's showing the white feather, and the like. Two days later, however, all was set right. In the week of the action the French had been reinforced to 200,000 men, or two to one of the allies; and Pichegru, their commander-in-chief, set them in motion to attack the whole line of the allies from the Sambre to the sea. It was, of course, a part of his plan to raise the siege of Landrecies; and to this end he ordered 45,000 men from Guise to attack the covering army on the east and south, and 30,000 men, under General Chappuis, to assail the Duke of York's line on the west. Early in the morning of the 26th, therefore, his columns fell upon the covering army at all points simultaneously. Chappuis led the bulk of his troops along the high road from Cambrai to Le Cateau, with a second column advancing upon the same point by a parallel course through the villages of Ligny and Bertry, a little farther to the south. Favoured by a dense fog, the French succeeded in driving the allies from the villages of Inchy and Beaumont upon the high road, and of Troisvilles, Bertry, and Maurois immediately to south of them. Thereupon they proceeded to form behind the ridge on which these villages stand, for the main attack. Before the deployment was complete the fog lifted, and the Duke of York perceived that Chappuis's left flank was in the air. He therefore made a great demonstration with his artillery against the French front, sent a few light troops to check and harass their right, and summoned all his cavalry to his own right, forming them unseen in a fold of the ground between Inchy and Bethencourt, a village a little to

or a month after the action. Surely men who attack an enemy of nearly ten times their strength need no excuse for killing every man that they can. The Fifteenth, if it will pardon me for saying so, should remove this piece of false sentiment and false history from its records.

westward of Inchy. The formation was in three lines—first, six squadrons of the Austrian Zeschwitz Cuirassiers, under Colonel Prince Schwarzenberg; next, Mansel's brigade; and in rear, the First and Fifth Dragoon Guards and Sixteenth Light Dragoons.

The whole of the nineteen squadrons then moved off under the command of General Otto, who advanced with great caution and skill, taking every advantage of the undulating ground to conceal his movements. A body of French cavalry was first encountered and immediately overthrown; General Chappuis, who was with them, being taken prisoner by the Third Dragoon Guards. Then the last rise in the ground was reached, and the squadrons saw their prey before them—over 20,000 French infantry drawn up with their guns in order of battle, serenely facing eastward in happy ignorance of the storm that was bursting on them from the north. There was no hesitation, for Schwarzenberg was an impetuous leader, and Mansel's brigade was anxious to regain its reputation; so with wild cheering the whole of the squadrons galloped down upon the left flank and rear of the French. The French guns, hastily wheeled round to meet the attack, opened a furious fire of grape, and the infantry as furious a fire of musketry, but without the slightest effect. In a very few minutes the whole mass of the French was broken up and flying in wild confusion to the southward, with the sabres hewing mercilessly among them. One detachment, which had been pushed forward to Troisvilles and there checked by the British artillery, saw the rest of the army in flight and hastened to join it. Meanwhile Chappuis's second column had advanced with its guns a little beyond Maurois, when the appearance of the fugitives warned them to retire; but in this quarter too there was a vigilant Austrian officer, Major Stepheicz, with two squadrons of hussars and four of the British Seventh and Eleventh Light Dragoons. He lost no time in following up the French column, drove the

rear-guard in upon the main body a little to westward of Maretz, and a few miles farther on broke in upon the main body also, dispersed it utterly, and captured 10 guns. 1200 Frenchmen were killed in this part of the field alone, so terrible was the Austrian hussar in pursuit; 2000 more had fallen under the sabres of Otto's division, which likewise captured 22 guns and 350 prisoners. A brigade of lancers would, I fancy, have tripled the losses, for Otto's division must have numbered 2000 sabres; but the British dragoon was a poor swordsman. The loss of the Austrians was 9 officers, 228 men, and 208 horses. Their war-strength being 170 to a squadron, we may reduce that number to 150 and take them at 900 men. The loss of the British was 6 officers, 156 men, and 289 horses killed, wounded, and missing; I do not think that we can reckon them at more than 1100 sabres. The Blues and Third Dragoon Guards suffered most heavily, having each of them 16 men and 25 horses killed outright. Also no fewer than five out of the six injured officers belonged to the Third. First, there was the Brigadier Mansel, their colonel, who galloped far ahead of his men into the middle of the French to prove that he was no coward, and was of course killed. His son, Captain Mansel of the same regiment, was wounded and captured when trying to rescue him. Happily Colonel Vyse, who commanded the other brigade of British, kept his head and took charge of both brigades.

One more action remains still to be noticed. It was fought at the western end of the theatre of war; for after the capture of Landrecies, the allies had moved westward to check an advance of the French from Lille upon the maritime provinces of Belgium. The allies were then drawn up in a line from seven to eight miles long, from Tournay in the south to Espierres in the north, with their front facing due west, threatening the right flank and communications of the French left wing. The Duke of York's corps was posted in an

entrenched position on the heights of Lamain and Hertain, looking down upon the cultivated plain of Cysoing. On the 10th of May the French made a general attack upon the whole line of the allies, and 30,000 men were sent in two columns to assail the 18,000 of the Duke of York. The stronger of these two columns, which included 5000 cavalry, followed the main road from Lille to Tournay ; the other turned south-east from Bouvines by Cysoing upon Bachy, as if to turn the Duke's left flank. This latter column was checked at Bachy by a small force of Austrians, and need trouble us no more. The first and more powerful column carried the advanced posts of Baisieux upon the main road, and of Camphin about a mile to south of it, and, deploying in the plain between these two villages, opened a furious cannonade from howitzers and heavy guns. The Duke, perceiving a gap in the enemy's line which left the right of the main body uncovered, ordered sixteen squadrons of British cavalry and two of Austrian hussars to descend by the low ground that lies to south of the heights of Lamain into the plain of Cysoing, and from thence to attack. The cavalry, which had been drawn up as fourth line behind three lines of infantry, accordingly moved down ; but the French infantry had improved in discipline, and, drawing itself into squares, faced the squadrons with admirable firmness. The ground too was in their favour, being broken by patches of cole-seed, which, it seems (for I have never seen it), is grown in trenches like celery. Hampered by these obstacles, the cavalry could never gather sufficient speed to break into the squares, but recoiled from the bayonets. The French now brought their own cavalry down to cover their infantry, and the whole then retired slowly along the plain to northward, with the British following them up, until their left came under fire of the French heavy batteries established at Gruson, to westward of Camphin. The Duke of York then ordered one brigade of infantry to advance between Gruson and Baisieux, and a second to advance by the same line as

the cavalry to support their attack. The French thereupon continued to retire in a northerly direction from Camphin towards Willem; while the British cavalry, now reinforced to twenty-two squadrons, under General Otto, still hovered about them, watching for its opportunity. After a time it fell upon the French cavalry on both flanks, and utterly overthrew it; but a renewal of the attack upon the infantry was again a failure. At last, a little to the south of Willem, the battalion-guns of the infantry came up, and the French, after receiving a few shots, began to waver. Thereupon the cavalry again charged, and an officer of the Greys galloping straight at the largest of the squares knocked down three men as he entered it, wheeled his horse round and overthrew six more, and thus made a gap for the entry of his men. The sight of one square broken and dispersed demoralised the remaining squares. Two more of them were ridden down, and for the third time the British sabres had free play. 2000 to 3000 of the French were cut down, 400 more and 13 guns were captured. The loss of the British was rather more than a hundred men killed and wounded, 90 horses killed, and 140 wounded and missing. The regiments engaged were the Blues, Second, Third, and Sixth Dragoon Guards, Royals, Greys, Inniskillings, and Seventh, Eleventh, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Light Dragoons; but which were the squadrons originally engaged and which came up as reinforcements, I do not know. The sources of information as to the action are, in fact, meagre, but the occasion is interesting as the first upon which the new French infantry stood up to cavalry in the open field. Unless I am mistaken, our cavalry never really rode over the French infantry again until Salamanca. Your natural question will be, Where was the horse-artillery? To this I can only reply that the horse-artillery was then little more than a year old, and still learning its business at Woolwich.

I shall say no more of the campaign in Flanders, which came to a disastrous end, chiefly through the ill faith of the Austrians. You will now be surprised

to find me turning next to the West Indies. Probably, though you are aware that some of your regiments served there, you have no idea what took them there. In the first place, a very small body of selected men, forty or fifty taken from several light dragoon regiments, accompanied General Grey to Martinique in 1794, apparently to do orderlies' work and such other duties as mounted men could fulfil in that very mountainous, rugged island. But at the end of 1795 the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Twenty-first, and three other regiments of Light Dragoons long since disbanded, were all ordered to the West Indies for service in St. Domingo. In that great island are rich plains, upon which the revolted negroes used to descend from the mountains; and the only troops which those negroes (who were men of ferocious bravery) really feared, were cavalry. No soldiers ever went through so many perils by sea as those that started for the West Indies in the stormy winter of 1795; and these light dragoons were scattered all over the Caribbean Archipelago, only to die miserably of yellow fever wherever they landed. There are, however, two noticeable points in connection with the service of the light dragoons in the West Indies, both of them, oddly enough, bound up with the same regiment, the Seventeenth Lancers. In the first place, a part of the regiment did duty as marines on board a frigate—a common matter enough with the infantry, but almost unique, so far as I know, in the cavalry. In the second place, a squadron of this same regiment was called upon to deal with a most dangerous enemy in a very peculiar mountain campaign. That enemy was a race, bred up since the days when the Spaniards owned Jamaica (that is to say, before 1654), of runaway slaves, who had taken refuge in the highest mountains in the wildest part of the island. They had been a peril and a nuisance to Jamaica for over a century. The Government had never been able to put them down, and had been driven to make a treaty with

them in George the Second's time, giving them certain lands under certain conditions. This arrangement was successful, and the Maroons became quite friendly, occupying themselves chiefly with hunting wild swine and runaway negroes in the great tropical forest. Hence they were excellent shots, knew the forest by heart, had a peculiar code of horn-signals for communicating with each other, and, lastly, knew the secret of some very peculiar strongholds in the mountains. These were certain deep glens, with sides of perpendicular rock and accessible only through narrow defiles, which were called cockpits. There is a chain of these cockpits traversing the mountains from east to west at the western end of the island, and parallel lines of them running from north to south. Some of them, when fairly entered, were large enough to admit of the cultivation of crops, and contained a spring of water; so that the Maroons could use them as bases for raids upon all the plantations in the lower ground, and could be pretty sure of gathering recruits from the slaves.

In the summer of 1795, when nearly all the negroes in the West Indies had risen in revolt, the Maroons rose also; and Jamaica trembled before the prospect of an insurrection of its tens of thousands of slaves under the leadership of the Maroons. The Governor, Lord Balcarres, an infantryman who had seen much service in America, tried to render them harmless by drawing a cordon all round them. He only lost several men by the "sniping" of the Maroons, who laughed at the cordon and walked through it just as they pleased. The exasperating part of the business was that the Maroons who were in revolt numbered hardly two hundred fighting men; and yet there they were, a very serious danger, and apparently invulnerable. Since the infantry-general did not know how to deal with the difficulty, a cavalry-colonel, Walpole of the Thirteenth Light Dragoons, took the matter in hand, and resolved to train British soldiers to beat the Maroons on their own ground. There were three

infantry regiments in Jamaica, also the Twentieth Light Dragoons, raised for Jamaica and quartered permanently in the island, and detachments of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Light Dragoons to choose from. Yet Walpole selected the squadron of the Seventeenth, and I have not, in my own mind, the least doubt as to his reason. The regiment had gone through the American War; it had probably a few men, and almost certainly a few non-commissioned officers, who had served in that war, and they had some knowledge, and many recent traditions, of the true function of a light dragoon—to be as much at home in the saddle as on foot, and on foot as in the saddle; to be as terrible in the charge as a cuirassier, and as cunning and handy with a firearm as any light infantryman. Walpole succeeded perfectly. The Seventeenth did beat the Maroons at their own game, upon their own ground; and Walpole declared in his public despatch that the submission of the Maroons was due to them, and to them alone. Yet the traditions of America did not prevent another squadron of the same regiment from emulating the dash of other light dragoons in the saddle; for in Grenada they cheerfully charged a force of revolted negroes, who were led by French officers, under a cross-fire of artillery, and thus saved a very critical action. Other regiments did quite as gallant deeds of this kind in the West Indies; but that immensely difficult and dangerous mountain-campaign in Jamaica stands, quite by itself, to the credit of the one regiment which had enjoyed American experience. Observe, gentlemen, how, by training your men to every description of work, you can gain employment and distinction for your regiments.

I must now advert to certain reforms of administration which were produced by the disasters of the two first years of the great war, and are of great importance to the history, not only of the cavalry, but of the Army. In February 1795, the Duke of York was placed at the head of the Army as Field-Marshal Commanding-

in-Chief. It was recognised at last, that in the military administration of the forces the military element had a right to a stronger voice than had yet been permitted to it. The discipline of the Army had been ruined by political government, and it was high time that it should be restored. Probably no better man for the place could have been found than the Duke of York. He had faults in plenty, and he was no very shining light in the field; but he was quite up to the average of intelligence, immensely industrious, most conscientious in his efforts to do justice to all, and a soldier to the backbone. I should be inclined to say that the Duke of York did more for the Army than any one man has done for it in the whole of its history. His first order was that no officer should correspond with the Commander-in-Chief except through his commanding officer—an elementary rule, as it may seem to us now, but probably the most valuable ever laid down for the discipline of officers. Very shortly afterwards came an important order commending a new system of cavalry drill to all colonels of cavalry, with instructions that it should be used by all. This system was the work of David Dundas, popularly known as "Old Pivot," who had produced the new drill-book for infantry a few years before. The drill, both for cavalry and infantry, was borrowed from the Prussians, and was modified almost as soon as received, in the infantry at any rate, by our adoption of two ranks instead of three. But the real point was that it was made uniform for the whole of the cavalry. Hitherto there had been no such thing as uniformity, but each colonel had selected such form of drill as pleased him best; so that a brigadier could never tell, upon giving the order for any movement, how the different regiments would execute it, or, indeed, whether they could execute it at all.

Early in the next year the Duke, evidently dissatisfied with much that he had seen in the cavalry during his two campaigns in Flanders, appointed a board of

generals to report upon it, which they did in May 1796. Their recommendations are curiously mixed, but some of them may interest you as showing how backward the cavalry was in many respects. One of the earliest was that a veterinary surgeon, an armourer, and a saddler should be appointed to each regiment. So far, I may tell you, all veterinary work had been entrusted to the farriers, a very few of whom may have been born veterinary surgeons (for there are such men), but the great majority had no knowledge beyond that of the use of the fleam. Then, as to clothing, they wished the coats of heavy cavalry to be short-skirted, with shoulder-straps strong enough to turn a sword-cut, the waistcoat to be sleeved, the breeches to be of plush lined with woollen, and the boots to be stout, with a strong, stiff top. In the matter of saddlery they put forward a new model of their own, and recommended the abolition of housings, those ponderous arrangements of cloth which in peace formed a decoration for the saddle, and in war were supposed to serve a man for blanket. In the matter of arms they recommended the substitution of a waist-belt for a shoulder-belt to carry the sword, and the restoration of the bayonet to the light dragoons; which last change was not accepted. Then, as to horses, they pointed out that officers had such difficulty in finding long-tailed horses that they should be permitted, even in the heavies, to ride nag-tailed horses. Then they went on to say that the black horses, on which the heavies had for years been mounted, were extinct, those in the market being good for draught purposes—they are still good to draw hearses—but unfit for a soldier. Moreover, a new breed of horses had arisen, bred chiefly for gentlemen's carriages, but well adapted for heavy cavalry, and therefore it would be well, without laying the blacks entirely aside, to admit horses of another colour. Accordingly, I may add, the Third, Fifth, and Sixth Dragoon Guards, and Fourth and Sixth Dragoons, were permitted to have coloured horses. There is also

an order that officers not providing themselves with chargers were to have one bought for them by their commanding officer, at a price not exceeding fifty guineas, which was to be stopped from their pay. Finally, the report recommended the advisability of instituting a visible mark to distinguish the ranks of officers—a thing up to that time unknown.

Then, in the same year, appeared the first regulations for sword exercise ever seen in the Army. They were drawn up by Angelo, the fencing-master, and are contained in what is now rather a rare book. But the sword was still a very bad one, with but a single bar for guard, long and straight for the heavy dragoons, shorter and very much curved for the light.

Then, in 1797, came a change which ought to have been made many years before. A solid increase of pay was given to the non-commissioned officers and men of the Army; and an extra shilling, with remission of all stoppages, was granted to the subalterns. Do not imagine that this concession was granted to the Army from any motives of justice or generosity. It was wrung from the Government by the mutiny of the fleet at Spithead. I cannot say from positive knowledge that representations had been made to ministers by naval officers as to the inadequacy of the pay given to the seamen, but I can prove that the insufficiency of the soldiers' pay had been demonstrated as far back as in 1768, and very strongly urged upon the Government both in 1788 and 1790. Yet until he had been thoroughly scared by a mutiny, and a just mutiny, Pitt never took the slightest notice; though then, of course, he yielded in a hurry. The mutiny did not spread to the Army generally, though there were unpleasant symptoms among the artillery at Woolwich, and still worse, though they did not immediately appear, among the cavalry in Ireland. In the year following the increase of pay came the Irish Rebellion; and another very serious matter, against which the Government had been warned gravely in 1786, came up in a

very ugly light. The Irish Horse and another Irish regiment had been kept too long in Ireland; and in 1798 active service found them out. One of them turned tail and galloped for thirty miles before an insignificant enemy at Castlebar; and the other, the old Fifth Dragoons, mutinied and was disbanded with ignominy, its place being kept blank on the Army List as a standing reproach. Yet it was not the officers and men who were to blame so much as a vicious system and the long and continued neglect of the Army by Ministers. The man who really deserved the blame for these mutinies, all of them the result not of temporary discontent but of long-standing and intolerable abuses, was William Pitt.

1798, however, was the year which really marked a turning-point in the war. By 1799 all alarm of invasion had vanished, Ireland was reduced to order, and we had shaken off that awful millstone of St. Domingo. The Duke of York was rapidly getting the Army into good order. It was becoming an efficient striking force, instead of a mob of half-trained recruits, only enlisted to be dribbled off to the West Indies and buried. I do not mean to imply that Pitt's ministry turned this force, when it was made, to really profitable account, for its military enterprises were foolish and fatuous to the very last. In fact, no good was done in that war by the Army until Pitt was safe in Westminster Abbey, and his most trusted confidant, Dundas, the Secretary of State for War, ruined and disgraced. But though employed on foolish errands, and therefore often unsuccessful, the Army never disgraced itself nor failed to inspire those who met it in the field with respect.

But unfortunately the cavalry had not the chance of the infantry to learn its work. I have already mentioned to you the name of General Money. He was an old soldier who had served in the Seven Years' War, and had, oddly enough, accepted a general's command from the French in the early days of the Revolution, fighting gallantly with them until France

declared war against England. This old general published, in 1798, a pamphlet containing some of the best observations that I have ever seen in our language upon the functions of both light infantry and light cavalry. You must remember that, until Bonaparte went to Egypt, all England believed (and of course he encouraged the belief) that his force was intended for the invasion of these islands. From 1794 onward there had been a succession of panics about invasion; and, since it had been judged that light cavalry would be of great service in harassing an invading army, many corps of Volunteer Cavalry—what we now call Yeomanry—had been raised. The whole of these had been trained as cavalry—that is to say, as undismountable troops; and against this Money lifted up his voice. "Is there," he asked, "any ground between London and Ipswich on which three squadrons of horse can form without being in reach of musketry from the hedgerows in their front and flanks? Of what use then, in God's name, is cavalry, where they cannot form to charge? for if they cannot form, they cannot charge." He did not dispute the value of true cavalry (Horse) in a country where it could act, and was eager to keep plenty of it; but he did quarrel vigorously with the fact that among all our mounted corps there were none, despite their names and descriptions, who were really what he called dismountable troops. Moreover, he brought abundance of examples of the success of the French mounted chasseurs in Italy to support his argument. "But," he added, "till this new system of horse-chasseurs be adopted by Austria or Prussia, whom we copy in most things, and have done for a century past, I suppose we shall remain as we are." Money's recommendations were sufficiently drastic. He proposed that half the regiments of light dragoons should be formed into legions. In each of these, the cavalry was to consist of 580 men in eight troops, all of them to be clothed, trained, and armed as dismountable dragoons, with either a rifle or a short

musket of half-inch bore, and a perfect cylinder barrel made expressly for carrying a ball true. The unmounted part of the legion was to comprise four companies, with a total of 240 men, to be armed as chasseurs on foot—that is to say, armed with rifles. Lastly, he attached to the legion two four-pounder guns. Such a corps, he contended, would be as efficient in open as in enclosed country; for, according to him, the command of ground in open country rests with the party that has missile weapons of longest range. It is not for me to give any opinion upon these points; but I think it beyond question that if no more than three or four regiments of light dragoons had been converted into what Money calls true dismountable dragoons, with an efficient firearm, the course of our cavalry's history would have been very different. And I must add, in justice to Money, that he was for as sweeping reforms in the infantry as in the cavalry. He wished to turn one-fifth of the infantry and one-fourth of the Militia into chasseurs—that is to say, into true light infantry armed with rifles; and he would have made the whole of the Yeomanry into dismountable dragoons.

Now, if you remember, Sir John Moore did train up a comparatively small body of infantry according to Money's ideas; and this body became famous as the Light Division, with the Ninety-fifth Rifles, now the Rifle Brigade, as noways the least distinguished corps in that division. Can any one doubt that, if Wellington's army had had two light divisions, or, indeed, had been composed of light divisions, it would have been a greater army even than it was? Let me not be told that the Light Division could not fight in close order in the line of battle as well as any of what Napier called the "bayonet-battalions"; for I have gone over the field of Fuentes D'Onor, and seen the ground over which the Division retired,—ideal ground for cavalry,—where a powerful force of French horse with horse-artillery utterly failed to make the slightest impression upon it.

There was no earthly reason, so far as I can see, why there should not have been light dragoon regiments quite as efficient on foot as the Rifle Brigade, and yet, squadron for squadron, quite as sure of riding down any French dragoons as our regiments actually were. Yet, what do we find? Craufurd preferred, and I am afraid rightly preferred, the hussars of the King's German Legion to any British cavalry for work with the Light Division. I do not say that these hussars were dismountable dragoons after Money's model; but they were at least genuine light cavalry, with their eyes and ears always open and their horses always fit; cunning as foxes in the matter of ground; enterprising,—for they had confidence in themselves,—and with no lack of dash upon occasion. It would have been worth while to have formed one or two of Money's legions, even if they were not quite the ideal to be wished for, in order to have given the British light dragoon at least a greater insight into this kind of work. There was no lack of officers to train them. One can read between the lines of the diary of Tomkinson of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons, how he and Somers-Cocks would have delighted in such a task, and how well they would have done it. Yet Somers-Cocks exchanged into the infantry, finding the cavalry too small a field for him under the ignorant and strait-laced old generals that were set over him. At the head of a regiment of light horse, such as we now understand by the name, he would have made himself remembered to this day.

I have thought it worth while to bring these matters to your notice, in order to show you really how old are many of the ideas which are nowadays flaunted about as new. I do not know if anything that I have said is contrary to sound doctrine; but if it be so, your Commandant will not hesitate to set me right. I have given you an account of three famous though unknown actions, where our cavalry galloped over the French, just as Mr. Sponge galloped over Lord Scamperdale's hounds on Multum in Parvo's "going

days." They were not to be held back. But then, as Money sagely observes, the French gave up meeting us in the open and forced us to fight in the enclosed country of Western Flanders; and from that moment we were constantly losing ground. The cavalry was useless, and, except for the supplying of a few patrols, might just as well have been in England. This is a difficulty which, in one form or another, is constantly cropping up, and will continue to crop up; and another observation of Money's, rather curious to read, is probably also true—that the process of enclosing land in Europe constantly progresses. He states, indeed, from his personal inquiry and observation, that had Western Flanders been in 1794 what it was in the days of Marlborough, the allies would have beaten the raw French levies out of the field. As he said in 1798, so we can say in 1904, that we have been copying Austria or Prussia for the last century. I venture to think that our own experience—though I am far from undervaluing the experience of others—has a great many lessons for us, if we will but learn them. It is far more varied than that of other nations; but, unfortunately, we neither know nor try to know anything about it. I do not hesitate to say that if we had thoroughly taken to heart the lessons of the American War of Independence, we should not only have shortened the war of the French Revolution enormously, but we should have had little to learn in South Africa in the late war. Let me end, therefore, by entreating you not to despise English military history. Learn at any rate thoroughly the history of your own regiments. I am aware that the records of many of them are very imperfect, and that it is extremely difficult for you to supplement them; but nevertheless you might try. In many of your regiments there are families which send you officers for generation after generation. You might at least ascertain whether these families, or any others that have been connected with your regiments, possess any letters or journals

relating to former wars. I have found useful material in more than one country-house by keeping my eyes open; and my experience is that people, when they know that one is hunting for historical documents, are most kind in giving help. I have at this moment copies of some documents, placed at my disposal most generously by the owner, which I hope to send later on to the Eighteenth Hussars. But they ought to have been in the hands of the Eighteenth long ago, being in the family of one of their former colonels; and every officer of that regiment ought to know all about them. At present, if I write to a regiment for some detail of a regiment's history, I receive always a most courteous reply, regretting that there are no means of ascertaining what I want to know. More often, indeed, officers come to me for information. I am delighted to supply it if I can; but it is all wrong that they should have to come to me. Indeed it is all wrong that I, a civilian, should be here at this moment, to tell you—as I gather, for the first time in your lives—of some of the greatest actions of our cavalry, wherein your own regiments have borne a distinguished part. It is not your fault; it is the fault of generations of officers before you; but you can begin to set it right. Regimental history is not, if rightly understood, a mere catalogue of dry facts. It is, and should be, the record of past experience, alike in failure and in success, not only for the maintenance of regimental spirit, though that alone is of enormous value, but for the guidance and instruction of both officers and men against the day when it will be their duty to uphold the honour of their regiment and their country upon the field of action.

V

ST. LUCIA, 1778

BEFORE the opening of the fourth campaign of the War of American Independence in 1778, the entire aspect of the struggle was changed by France's open declaration of hostilities against England. So far the British had enjoyed undisputed supremacy at sea on the American coast, and had turned it to good account. The fleet had carried Howe's small army away from destruction in Boston in 1775; it had brought it back to the capture of New York and Rhode Island in 1776 and of Philadelphia in 1777; and, but for the imbecility of Lord George Germaine, it would have averted the disaster of Saratoga by transporting Burgoyne to New York. By the entry of the French navy on the scene, however, all this was changed. Doubtless there were many who would gladly have abandoned all operations against America and turned the whole strength of England against France; but this was forbidden by the aggressive attitude of the Americans themselves. It is customary to represent them as an innocent, down-trodden people, who were driven by ill-treatment to take up arms for their defence. Nothing could be further from the fact. The revolutionary party in Boston was from the first bent on aggression. The riots over the Stamp Act were violent beyond all proportion to the provocation; the invasion of Canada preceded any attempt to drive the British from Boston; and the despatch of seditious emissaries to the West

Indies, and actual raids upon Bermuda and the Bahamas, furnish additional evidence that the revolutionary leaders were inflated with offensive schemes of the most ambitious kind. The withdrawal of British troops from America would have brought about a fresh invasion of Canada, and a joint attack of Americans and French upon the West Indies. The British foiled the first by continuing offensive operations on the continent. Their measures to protect the West Indies are the subject of the present essay.

Both the British and the French possessions in the Caribbean Archipelago were and are divided into two groups—the eastward and the westward, or, in the more familiar terms of the trade-wind, the windward and the leeward. Those of the windward chain, with which alone we are at present concerned, were at that time even more curiously divided between the two nations than at present. To windward of all lies Barbados, then as always English, in a most advantageous position; for, being the island nearest to Europe, it was the first to receive troops and supplies from the old country, and could count upon a fair wind to distribute them among the other islands. It was beyond all others wealthy and prosperous, but having unfortunately no safe harbour, it could not be used as a naval base of operations. One hundred and fifty miles south-west of Barbados is Tobago, then the most southerly of our West Indian possessions; and from Tobago northward there run in succession the English islands of Grenada and St. Vincent, which have none of them any safe harbour of importance, and were then so slightly settled and so thinly populated as to be of comparatively little value. Each one of them possessed a small garrison of three or four hundred men, sufficient to protect them against the raids of the native Caribs (who were as yet still numerous and inclined to mischief), but wholly inadequate to repel a French attack.

North of St. Vincent, however, the chain of the British possessions was broken first by the French

island of St. Lucia, with its excellent harbour of Port Castries, which was well fortified. Next to St. Lucia lies another French island, Martinique, with the harbour then called Fort Royal, which also was strongly fortified and held by a considerable garrison, having been for years the head-quarters of the French to windward. Thirty miles north of Martinique comes Dominica, a British island, with no safe harbour, and at that time little settled and weakly held ; then comes Guadeloupe, another French island, with a fine and well-fortified harbour ; and to north of Guadeloupe lies the cluster of British islets known officially as the Leeward Islands, all of them rich and prosperous at that time, but with no good port except at Antigua, where St. John's constituted the one British naval station. The trend of these eastern islands being in a curve from south-west to north-west, they are subject among themselves to the inexorable law of the trade-wind ; and hence Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia are still officially called the Windward, and Antigua with her sisters the Leeward Islands. For instance, though you might sail from Martinique to Dominica in a few hours, you could not beat back from Dominica to Martinique in less than three or four days against wind and current; similarly the passage from Barbados to Martinique would occupy twenty-four hours, but the return voyage was bound to occupy a fortnight or three weeks at least, and might on occasion prove absolutely impossible. But the chief advantage lay on the side of the French ; for, with the exception of Barbados, Martinique and St. Lucia are the most easterly of the whole chain, and they have good harbours, whereas Barbados has none. The task for the British was to find a position to seal the fountain-head of French aggression at Martinique.

Hence it was that in the middle of 1778 the Commander-in-Chief in America received orders to ship about 6000 of his troops to Barbados for a secret expedition to the West Indies. A powerful French fleet under Count d'Estaing had been on the

American coast during the whole summer, but had accomplished nothing, and finally had sailed on November 4 for Martinique, to spend a profitable winter in the West Indies. On the very same day Commodore Hotham sailed from New York, escorting the fifty-nine transports on which the British troops were embarked, and set his course likewise for the West Indies. As the two commanders had started together, so they arrived practically together at their destination. D'Estaing, with twelve unencumbered ships, reached Martinique on December 9; twenty-four hours later Hotham brought the whole of his unwieldy charge into Carlisle Bay at Barbados, and found, as he expected, a squadron lying there at anchor.

Very beautiful the sight must have been as the huge fleet came sliding in over the clear, blue water, with the sails shining white under the tropical sun and the line of redcoats round every ship's side. Very welcome too to the men must have been the view of the low hills, with their robe of green sugar-cane and their crown of windmills, after a cold and stormy passage of thirty-six days: possibly more welcome still was the glimpse of rum-shops on the foreshore. But flying on one of the line-of-battle ships was the flag of Rear-Admiral Barrington, from whom came at once a stern order that not a man must go ashore, but that all must work their hardest to ship water and stores, and to make good defects. No doubt there was grumbling; no doubt there were longing glances at innocent-looking cocoa-nuts, containing something stronger than milk, which were visible among the vegetables in the negroes' bumboats. Still, fresh meat and bananas were some compensation for the loss of the liquor, and it may be guessed that at least a ration of rum was served out to all at the end of a hard day's work. Within twenty-four hours all was ready: the sick had been landed and the needful stores embarked; and then, without a moment's delay, the anchors were weighed

and the sails let fall, and fleet and transports vanished away to leeward before the trade-wind.

Early on the morning of December 13 every soldier on deck was straining his eyes at two little blue mounds which peeped over the horizon far to the south-west. Higher and higher they rose, like two tall sugar-loaves out of the sea, while the lower peaks of a tangled confusion of hills rose likewise on their northern side. The sugar-loaves were the Pitons of St. Lucia, so the troops were told, marking the southern end of the island. Then another mass of blue mountains rose to the north-west, which could be no other than Martinique. The fleet now ran round the northern end of St. Lucia, altered its course from west to south, and closed in with the western coast, till all could see the beautiful chaos of lofty volcanic mountains in their heavy mantle of tropical forest. But the officers noticed that one or two of the lower hills were square-topped and had flags flying on them ; while from three different headlands there came puffs of white smoke as the fleet passed by, and the round-shot flew skimming over the water, generally falling far short of the ships, but twice striking one or other of them. A deep, narrow bay shrinking far into the heart of the hills, with a cluster of houses at its head, attracted every soldier's eye, for they were told that it was Port Castries ; but the Admiral held on his course for two miles south of it, when the leading ship suddenly put her helm over, and at two o'clock dropped her anchor in an inlet called Grand Cul-de-Sac. The rest of the fleet followed, the troops eagerly preparing for disembarkation, and within a very short time the boats were filled with redcoats on their way to the shore.

By five o'clock one brigade of the troops under General Medows was landed complete with arms, accoutrements, and one day's provisions only, and at once began its march, the light companies of the whole force leading the way. The direction of the column

was northward, and the only track was a path following the spur of a very steep hill through thick and impenetrable jungle; but the patient soldiers plodded along it in single file for two weary miles in the failing light, when a sputter of musketry in their front made the light infantry dash forward, just in time to see a small party of Frenchmen running for their lives. One of them was caught, but would give no information, except that, though taken, he personally was still unconquered, and that there were plenty of Frenchmen on the island to defend it. It being now dark, the troops bivouacked where they stood, and at daybreak found themselves at the foot of a much higher and steeper hill than that which they had passed, with a party of the enemy awaiting them in their fortifications at the summit. Five more battalions of the British force joined the advanced brigade shortly after daybreak, and the whole then continued their forward movement, with no further molestation than a few shot plunging down from the French cannon above them. Their march still lay along the same narrow track up an extremely steep ascent, where it would have been easy for a resolute force, however weak, to check them. But on reaching the top, breathless with the long climb in the tropical heat, they met with a flag of truce, and, after the firing of a few shots by some ignorant inhabitants, they received peaceable possession of all the fortifications, with the buildings, stores, and guns within them. The garrison of St. Lucia had evidently not yet arrived in the island; and the Morne Fortuné, for the hill was no other, was thus captured practically without resistance.

From the summit of the height the British looked down on the harbour of Castries Bay beneath them and on the few houses at its head, but saw no sign of cultivation—nothing but range upon range of mountains, even higher than the Morne Fortuné, all covered with jungle, and crowned by a bank of mist which presently broke in a deluge of tropical rain. Medows's brigade

then descended the hill to the harbour, marched round the head of it, and without firing a shot took possession of a peninsula called the Vigie, which bounds it on the northern side. Thus the whole of the forts and batteries, mounting in all fifty-nine guns, which protected Port Castries, fell with their ammunition and stores into the hands of the British; and a fortified harbour was gained, ready made, at the cost of a very few men killed and wounded. All that the army now desired was that the squadron would come in with the baggage, for neither officers nor men had anything except the clothes in which they stood. Towards evening the officers, looking northward towards Martinique, made out twenty-four sail at sea, and were lost in conjecture as to what they might be; but deciding that they must be provision-ships from Barbados, they mentally wished them a good passage and went grumbling to such rest as they could find.

On the following morning, December 15, the strange fleet came close under the shore and was seen to be that of Count D'Estaing, consisting of twenty-four ships of war, or more than double the number of Barrington's squadron, with fifty or sixty smaller craft evidently full of troops. General Grant, who was in chief command of the troops, in hot haste sent an officer to warn the Admiral in Cul-de-Sac Bay; but when the messenger arrived he found the whole of the transports packed neatly within the inlet, and the men-of-war anchored in perfect order across the entrance. Barrington had seen the enemy's fleet on the previous evening, and having spent the night in making his dispositions, had retired to rest in a hammock among his ship's company. The aide-de-camp roused him and delivered his message by the hammock's side. "Young man," said the Admiral drowsily, "I cannot write to the General at present; but tell him that I hope he is as much at ease on shore as I am on board." And with that he laid his head on the pillow and went to sleep again.

In due time the French fleet came up to the entrance of the Bay and very solemnly filed twice past the British squadron, keeping up a heavy cannonade at long range, which did no damage whatever beyond the wounding of three men. Then, deciding that he had better leave Barrington alone, D'Estaing beat back to Anse du Choc, a bay immediately to the north of the Vigie peninsula, where his troops were disembarked on the same evening. On the two following days his small craft returned to Martinique to fetch more men, while the French men-of-war tried to make their way into Castries harbour, and to cut off the supply of provisions from the imprisoned fleet in the Cul-de-Sac. But the French engineers had done their work so well when they fortified Port Castries that no ship could approach within effective range of the Vigie ; and though the British boats were easily prevented from bringing provisions from the squadron to the army by day, they passed as easily through the French cruisers by night.

Still the situation of the British was an anxious one, for the defeat of the army would mean that Barrington's squadron would be driven by French guns ashore into the jaws of D'Estaing's superior fleet, while the defeat of the squadron would deprive the army of its supplies. Moreover, the nature of the case had compelled Grant to divide his small force. Four battalions, under Sir Henry Calder, had been left to guard the heights around Cul-de-Sac Bay to prevent attack upon the transports from the land, and to maintain communication with Morne Fortuné. Five more battalions held Morne Fortuné itself, to secure the south shore of Port Castries ; while the remaining three under Medows held the peninsula of Vigie. This peninsula presented a strong defensive position, since the approach to it lay across an isthmus little more than two hundred yards wide at its narrowest point ; and Medows had accordingly drawn up the bulk of his force in rear of this neck, with a single advanced post beyond it on the mainland.

The French meanwhile had taken up a position at

right angles to Medows's line and not more than two miles distant from it, pushing forward their picquets until the French sentries could—and in one case actually did—exchange pinches of snuff with the British. The question was, What were D'Estaing's intentions? What he would have liked, no doubt, would have been for Medows to have withdrawn the whole of his troops in rear of the neck, when he could have left a sufficient force to hold him in check, and marched round the head of the harbour with the remainder to attack Morne Fortuné ; but Medows had been careful, as we have seen, to preserve egress from the peninsula by means of an advanced post. There remained, therefore, one of two alternatives,—to leave a force to contain that of Medows, and to move the bulk of the French troops to Cul-de-Sac Bay, so as to overwhelm Calder ; or to make an end of Medows, if possible, at a single stroke. A clue to D'Estaing's designs was obtained on the evening of the 17th, when a French deserter came into Vigie with the news that the French were so posted as to isolate the brigade on the peninsula completely, and that they intended to attack it forthwith with twelve thousand men. Medows's officers shrugged their shoulders at a mere deserter's story, but, reflecting on the tried excellence and long experience of their own men, rather hoped that it might be true.

Indeed, the brigade occupying Vigie, though mustering but thirteen hundred men, was of no ordinary quality. It consisted of the Fifth, now known as the Northumberland Fusiliers, and the grenadier companies and light companies of the Fourth, Fifteenth, Twenty-seventh, Twenty-eighth, Thirty-fifth, Fortieth, Forty-sixth, and Fifty-fifth, massed into a grenadier battalion and a light infantry battalion as was the fashion of the day. The flank companies, as they were called, were the finest men of their regiments, and the regiments in themselves were composed of no common soldiers. Most of them had been engaged at Bunker's Hill, and every one of them in the victorious actions of Brooklyn,

Fort Washington, and Brandywine. The commander of this detachment too, Colonel Medows, had served in Germany under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, and had fought through most of the American War ; while he was by nature not only a good and daring soldier, but a man of so buoyant a temper and so cheerful a wit that no one could feel discouraged in his presence. His epigrams enlivened more than one storming party afterwards in India, and on one occasion he actually averted a panic by a timely jest.

Throughout the night of the 17th the rain fell heavily, continuing until seven o'clock in the morning, when it was observed that the French were nearer to the British advanced posts than usual, and in greater numbers. The main position of the British, in rear of the neck of the peninsula, lay on the slope of a low, rugged hill, the foot of which was covered with scrub. Outside the neck, the advanced post of five companies of light infantry was stationed upon two low hills ; and this was the point which appeared to be threatened by the enemy. General Medows and two of his battalion commanders went down to it to see what might be going forward ; when to their horror the officers in the rear of the neck saw two strong French battalions emerge suddenly from a belt of low brushwood along the beach and move up against the front and flank of the light infantry as if to cut them off. It was an awkward moment, for the General seemed to be in danger of being cut off also, and, in the absence of orders, many doubted whether the main body ought not to advance in order to rescue their comrades. But presently Medows came back perfectly cool and composed. "The light infantry will take care of themselves," he said ; "as for you, stand fast."

The light infantry did take care of themselves, for they had learned some useful lessons in America. Advancing in skirmishing order, and keeping themselves always under cover, they maintained at close range a most destructive fire upon the heavy French columns.

If the French attempted to extend, they threatened a charge with the bayonet; when the French closed up, they were themselves already extended and pouring in a galling fire; when the French advanced with solidity and determination, they retired as if beaten, and disappeared, but only to renew their fire, invisible themselves, from every direction. But when at last one of the French battalions gave way, they followed them and completed the rout with the bayonet. Meanwhile the rest of the French army came up slowly in solid columns to the attack of the main position, unobserved by the light infantry, who were returning to the defence of their advanced post. "Come back, come back," yelled their comrades and the grenadiers from behind the neck; but the light companies would not hear, until, regaining the slope, they saw their danger, and dashed into the scrub to join the main body. They made their escape in safety, thanks in part to the density of the brushwood, but thanks above all to Captain Downing, Lieutenant Waring, and Privates Rose, Duffy, and Hargrove of the Fifty-fifth, who stood alone and unaided in a narrow path to cover their retreat. These five gallant fellows parried the bayonet-thrusts for long, until Waring was thrust through the body and Downing was on the point of sharing his fate, when a French officer stepped forward and touched his sword with a significant gesture. There was no resisting so chivalrous an appeal, and Downing with his three companions surrendered.

The French now developed their attack upon the main position, filling the scrub near the foot of the hill with their light troops, while their battalions in massive columns continued their slow and steady advance. The British field-guns (four three-pounders) now opened fire, quickly silencing the still lighter pieces of the French; and the British grenadiers, who were fast dropping under the bullets of the enemy's sharpshooters, likewise began their fire, in perfect order and without confusion, husbanding every cartridge, for they had but thirty rounds a man. Meanwhile the French

columns never fired a shot, though whole ranks of them were swept away by the British cannon. They endured the punishment with all the bravery of their nation, but made no progress, though they kept changing direction to right and left as if looking for the easiest way to ascend the hill. One of them broke twice and was twice rallied, until at last they all came to a dead halt, still within range of the British, and there like helpless images they stood or fell.

Meanwhile the British on their side were falling fast, and ammunition began to fail. The French, too, brought forward fresh battalions, as if determined to carry the position ; and Medows gave the order to cease fire until the enemy should come within very close range, when the troops should retire under the smoke of their volleys to the summit of the hill, form line, and charge with the bayonet. The British musketry fell silent accordingly, and the men, reserving five rounds apiece, sat down and endured the enemy's fire ; but still the French did not advance. Fresh ammunition from the magazine on Morne Fortuné was presently brought across the harbour in a boat, and on the reopening of the British fire the French retired in confusion. The fight had lasted for three hours, from eight until eleven o'clock in the morning.

The casualties of the British did not exceed 171, of whom 13 only were killed ; the grenadiers losing close upon 90 officers and men, and the light infantry over 60. Medows himself was wounded early in the day, but never left the field for a moment ; and when the action was over he visited every wounded officer and man before he would receive the surgeon's attention himself. His epigrammatic soul had been greatly cheered by an answer returned to him by a young subaltern, Lieutenant Gomm of the Forty-sixth, who in the heat of the action was wounded in the eye. "I hope that you have not lost your eye, sir," said the General. "I believe I have, sir," replied Gomm, "but with the other I shall see you victorious this day."

Meanwhile the unwounded officers made their way to the neck where the French columns had stood, and came upon a scene which turned them sick. The white-coats, hideously stained, lay thick upon the ground, over 400 men having been killed outright, and 1200 grievously wounded. Very soon every British soldier who could be spared was ministering to the poor fellows, and some of the officers were for burying the dead; but here Medows interposed, saying that the French must do that for themselves. So a flag of truce was sent to Count D'Estaing accompanied by a bugle-horn, which, having been at first fired upon (since the French were not aware that the bugle had already begun to replace the drum), was courteously received and dismissed. Four hundred Frenchmen came down to inter their dead, but after six hours had not finished their work, which our men were fain to complete for themselves.

Even so, however, D'Estaing did not wholly abandon the hope of expelling the British. On the day following the action he sent thirty transports full of troops to the south of Cul-de-Sac, where they landed with the intention of seizing some heights that overlooked the bay, erecting mortar batteries on them, and bombarding the transports that were crowded together in the inlet. But Sir Henry Calder speedily detached some of the Thirty-fifth and Fortieth to seize the heights, and the French, finding themselves forestalled, would not hazard another attack. The attempt was therefore abandoned, and after a week more of sullen delay D'Estaing, on December 28, returned with his ships and the remains of his army to Martinique. The few French posts that still remained then hauled down their flags; and on January 6, 1779, Admiral Byron, after long delay through storms,—the usual luck of Foul-weather Jack, as the men called him,—arrived with his fleet, securing to the British the possession of St. Lucia.

Thus closed an extremely remarkable little campaign, one of the few of which it may truly be said that the whole issue turned upon twenty-four hours of time.

Had Barrington delayed for one day longer at Barbados, his squadron and transports must have fallen a prey to D'Estaing's far superior fleet. Even then, had Grant waited till next dawn instead of landing his troops and beginning his march in the dusk of the evening, the French militia with their small nucleus of regular troops might have held Morne Fortuné until D'Estaing came to their relief. The island once occupied and D'Estaing fairly on the spot, it remained for the British commanders by land and sea to play their parts to perfection, for the defeat of either meant disaster to both. Yet so admirable were the dispositions not only of Barrington and Grant, but of Grant's brigadiers, Calder and Medows, that D'Estaing was driven back with shame and with heavy loss to Martinique.

The action on the Vigie is also notable in itself, being the first example of the employment of the new British tactics, learned in America, against the old system favoured in Europe. The French were puzzled beyond measure by the work of the British light infantry. They had chasseurs of their own, but these were never supposed to make any serious resistance, whereas five companies of British chasseurs had made havoc of two battalions which outnumbered them by four to one, not only by defence but by counter attack. Beyond all question Medows relied not a little on the moral effect of these new tactics upon troops trained in an older school, for the maintenance of those five companies in their isolated position was obviously an extremely hazardous step. Yet he took that step deliberately, and he was fully justified by success. Every officer and man of his force knew what to do, and did it; whereas the French, though they fought bravely enough, were absolutely at a loss. In fact, the behaviour of Medows's battalions was exactly that of the famous Light Division in its palmiest days; thus confirming the forgotten fact that Moore's reforms in tactics were built on the experience of America.

For the rest, St. Lucia remained in British hands

until the close of the war, with the most important results. Grant, an excellent officer with the greatest admiration for the Navy, perceived its value at once. "We are here in a way looking into Fort Royal," he wrote,—at the very gate, in other words, of the chief French naval station to windward,—and he resolved that such a post of vantage should not easily be lost. Lord George Germaine, who, for the sins of England, was acting at this time as her Minister of War, wished to disperse the garrison over the neighbouring British islands; but Grant absolutely refused to do so. Three of the islands were indeed taken by the French, but Grant declined to accept the blame of these mishaps, retorting upon this insolent Secretary of State that it was his lordship's own fault if islands were captured, since this could never have happened unless the British had been of inferior strength at sea. The mortality among the troops in St. Lucia was indeed terrible, until in 1780 a hurricane, by laying the whole of the forest low, improved the climate amazingly. But, healthy or unhealthy, the island was securely held, though the French made more than one attempt to retake it; and in 1782 its value was proved to the full.

The next inlet to the north of Anse du Choc is known as Gros Islet Bay, deriving its name from a rocky islet, called by the British Pigeon Island. It is a desolate, barren hillock, strewn with the bones of whales and honeycombed by disused tanks and the foundations of ruined storehouses and magazines. Once it was garrisoned, and still it is a historic spot. In this bay, for many weeks in the spring of 1782, lay Admiral Rodney's fleet, while a chain of frigates connected him by signal with the ships that watched the French fleet some fifty miles to northward in its safe harbour at Martinique; and on this Pigeon Island, it is said, the great admiral used to take his stand, day after day, with his glass under his arm, watching for the signal that the French would sail,—"in a way looking into Fort Royal," as Grant said. On April 8 the long-

awaited signal fluttered down the line of frigates, and the fleet weighed anchor, to win, on the 12th, the Battle of the Saints and thereby to assure the confederated enemies of England, whether foreign or rebel, that she had still the power to make them tremble.

St. Lucia was restored to the French by the peace of 1783, reconquered by General Grey in 1794, retaken by the French within a twelvemonth, and finally reconquered after an arduous struggle by Abercromby in 1796, to pass finally into our possession by the Peace of Paris in 1814. It is now what it was designed to be in 1778, our principal naval station to windward ; and it may be therefore that the old fortifications on Morne Fortuné have within recent years been swept away. But Pigeon Island remains, and probably there are few admirals on the West Indian Station who do not pay it a visit, in order (to use the words of one whom the writer himself was privileged to accompany) "to stand where old Rodney stood before he went out to lick the French."

NOTE.—In modern maps the hill occupied by Medows's advanced posts appears within instead of without the neck of the isthmus which connects the peninsula of Vigie with the mainland. Study of the maps of the eighteenth century shows that the coast-line of the isthmus has undergone much change since 1778 ; and in the map attached to this volume the old coast-line is, as far as possible, restored.

VI

TRANSPORT AND SUPPLY

(A HISTORICAL SKETCH)

A DISTINGUISHED officer once scrawled down for me, *currente calamo*, the following brief but admirable summary of the development of our system of Transport and Supply.

1. Plunder pure and simple.
2. Plunder systematised into the creation (more or less) of magazines.
3. Financial interference; the soldier being mulct of pay for subsistence given to him from magazines furnished by plunder.
4. Organised plunder, or the creation of magazines by requisition.
5. Discovery of the fact that a population will fill magazines more readily if paid, and the organisation of this system under the Treasury.
6. The demands of increased mobility necessitate better supply. Requisition is supplemented by supplies brought from a distance. A Commissary is instituted to manage this. Increased mobility entails the occupation of wider areas, and transport is introduced to extend the areas fed by the magazines.
7. Transport is thereupon systematised as Supply had been.
8. Experience shows that mobility can only be assured by complete organisation. Transport and Supply thereupon become first a semi-military and then a completely military organisation.

9. As organisation is evolved, the constant tendency is to render all units more really mobile, *i.e.* self-equipped and self-dependent.

It would not, I think, be profitable in treating of this subject to go back to the days of Crecy, nor to give quotations from Rymer's *Fœdera* of the contracts of mediæval times; so it will be best to make the great Civil War our starting-point, with the aid of Mr. Firth's admirable work on *Cromwell's Army*. It is interesting to note that in the Dutch, Swedish, and some of the German armies during the seventeenth century, the whole business of Transport and Supply was committed to a "General Proviant-Master," under whom the Waggon-master (whose title explains itself) and Quarter-master were subordinate officials. Thus the great principle that a single functionary should be at the head both of Transport and Supply, of the waggon and of its load, was early recognised abroad. But in England it is needless to say that nothing so practical was known. In Essex's army there was a Commissary of provisions and a Carriage-Master-General, the waggons and teams being, of course, impressed or hired; but Transport and Supply were under different heads, there was neither forethought nor system, and the troops appear to have lived as best they could.

When the New Model Army was formed in 1645, there seems to have been an honest attempt to put the service of Transport and Supply upon a sounder footing; and it is worth while to glance at the constitution of the Staff. First there were eight Treasurers at War, in supreme control of the military chest; next there were Commissaries-General of Victuals and of Horse Provisions, for Supply; a Waggon-Master-General for Transport; and a Commissary-General of the Horse, who was a combatant officer, and apparently unconcerned with the Commissariat except in title. Moreover, for the Train, as the Artillery was then called, there was a Commissary of the draught horse, and a Commissary of

ammunition. All gun-teams and drivers were, of course, hired at that time and, indeed, almost to the end of the eighteenth century.[1] With all this elaborate machinery, however, it appears that the Army depended for its subsistence upon sutlers and vintners—that is to say, upon private speculators who followed the Army, and were subject to certain fixed regulations. In older days it had always been the Provost-Marshal's business to fix the prices at these sutlers' markets, and probably this course was still pursued. In addition to this, the troops were, from 1645 to 1649, quartered upon the inhabitants for lodging and subsistence, and a proportion of their pay was deducted for payment of the same.

The only really scientific campaign of the time, in the matter of Transport and Supply, was that of Monk in the Highlands, who evidently acted as Director-General of these departments as well as Commander-in-Chief. His system was to form independent bases of Supply for several lines of operations, to fill up his magazines with ten months' supplies, and to carry his victuals for the field on trains of hired pack-horses. Thus he could start from one base with provisions enough to carry him on to his next line of supply, where he could replenish, and so continue the pursuit of his wary and elusive enemy. But Monk was far ahead of his contemporaries as a military administrator, and many years were to pass before so perfect an organisation was to be seen again.

At the Restoration, or very soon after, the Treasurer at War disappeared, and the whole of his functions were merged in the Commissary. The Commissariat, therefore, became a department of the Treasury, charged, as time went on, with an increasing multiplicity of duties, some of them regular, some of them intermittent, until, in the reign of Queen Victoria, they attained to a variety and a complexity which the reader would hardly credit if I were to write them down.

[1] Napoleon's guns, during his first Italian campaign, were drawn entirely by hired teams with hired drivers.

Among these duties, practically from the Restoration onward, was the provision of Transport and Supplies for an army in the field. Hence any one who desires to seek out original information upon the subject must search the records, not of the War Office, the Colonial Office, or the Foreign Office (for, owing to our abominable system of administration, our military records have been and still are distributed among all three departments), but of the Treasury.

The usual procedure, therefore, of old days in preparing for a war was first to appoint the Commander-in-Chief, and then to apply to the Treasury to appoint a Commissary. This the Treasury proceeded to do, and therewith to invest its nominee with the care of the military chest, or, in other words, with supreme financial control. Since all matters of Transport and Supply were accomplished by contract, it fell to him to make those contracts; but when once the transport had been hired it was necessary to make it over to a military officer, the Waggon-master, for organisation and conduct, or, in other words, to transfer the responsibility of it to another department. Here at once appeared a seat of friction between the civilian Commissary and the military Waggon-master, the more dangerous inasmuch as by his power of the purse the Commissary retained much authority, and could put pressure even upon the Commander-in-Chief. Sometimes he was both an honest man and an able man of business; more often in early days he was neither the one nor the other; and the result was a traditional tendency among all soldiers to regard the Commissary as a natural enemy.

The scandals of the Commissary's department were probably never worse than in the reign of William the Third. The iniquities of Commissary Shales have been written down in more than one place, but they are trifling compared to some of those recorded in the case of expeditions across the Atlantic. On such occasions the confusion was incredible, and the duties heaped upon the

Commissary were endless. The supplies for the troops were generally drawn (with difficulty and after acrimonious correspondence) from the Victualling Board of the Navy, and entrusted to his care. The military chest was also committed to him by the Treasury. Next he received a commission from the Board of Ordnance, and the custody of all stores from that department, in order to save the expense of a special Commissary of Ordnance. Lastly, the Apothecaries' Company was called upon to furnish medicines, and these also were consigned to the Commissary. Since the man's sole training had been that of a clerk, it may be imagined that so much power and responsibility invariably demoralised him. No sooner did such an expedition get to sea (always four or five months later than the appointed time) than quarrels began between the sailors, the soldiers, and the Commissary. In a West Indian expedition of 1693, the General and the Commodore opened their campaign by confining the Commissary in a small vessel by himself, under the custody of a sergeant's guard. In a similar expedition of 1695, the Commodore took sides with the Commissary against the General, and the Commissary actually wrecked the operations by refusing to land the guns, stores, and supplies which were under his charge.[1]

With the advent of Marlborough matters improved, at any rate within the sphere of his command. In the Low Countries, and doubtless also in the other cockpits of Europe, long experience of war seems to have raised up a race of contractors who understood the needs of a campaign. It is extremely difficult to ascertain the facts in any detail; but it is certain that a general contract was made by the Duke of Marlborough with Sir Solomon Medina for the supply of the Allied Army with bread and bread-waggons. And here should be noticed the limitation of the Commissary's duties, so far as the food

[1] The authorities for these statements, together with many curious details, will be found in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, 1693-1696.

of the men was concerned, to the article of bread. In the days of the Civil War cheese had been added to bread, and apparently in King William's Irish campaign also; but from 1702, at any rate, cheese disappears from the ration, and for all subsistence apart from bread the men were dependent on sutlers who were attached to each regiment.

I have unfortunately failed to discover any record of Marlborough's orders upon this subject; but I have little doubt that his methods were followed exactly by Wade and the Duke of Cumberland in their campaigns in the Low Countries (1744-1747), and can therefore make the omission good from their orders. All sutlers were licensed; the number of them being limited to one grand sutler for every regiment, and one petty sutler for every troop and company; and no soldier or soldiers's wife was permitted to be a sutler. Forage was allowed to sutlers for their horses, which were limited to fourteen for a battalion of foot, twelve to a regiment of dragoons, and fifteen to a regiment of horse. The major of each regiment was responsible that its sutlers sold by fair weight and measure, and that their goods were sound and wholesome. It was ordered that the men should mess regularly, and that they should have bacon or "other flesh meat" twice a week, every man paying his proportion towards the expense. This must have meant a regimental stoppage for meat, over and above the Army stoppage for bread. For vegetables, parties were sent out to gather roots. Commanding officers were further required to encourage butchers (who were likewise licensed) to follow their regiments with a good stock of cattle and sheep, and to sell meat to the men, lest they should expend too much of their pay in drink. It is therefore clear that the bread-ration[1] was the Commissary's concern, and the remainder of the soldier's food a regimental matter.

[1] The ration was 1½ lb. of bread, and the men paid 5d. for the 6-lb. loaf. The ration was the same during the Peninsular War, 1 lb. of biscuit being rated as equivalent to 1½ lb. of bread.

Forage, being very precious, was most jealously distributed after every foraging excursion, and accounted for to the Commissary.

Baggage was a regimental matter, but all waggons were under the control of the Waggon-master; and the penalty for a baggage-waggon that presumed to move on the march without his direction, or away from its proper place, was to be plundered, no matter to whom it might belong. It is, however, noticeable that one bread-contractor's waggon was allowed to each regiment for conveyance of the sick, and that no women, children, nor baggage were allowed to be carried in it. Many years passed before any attempt was made to improve this primitive ambulance.[1]

But the problem of Transport and Supply became far more complicated when a campaign was fought in a new country, such as the American Colonies. There, again, on the waterway between New York and Lake Champlain, countless little expeditions had shown both soldiers and contractors how to move troops and to feed them in small parties; but owing to the difficulty of passing the supplies over the "carrying places," where the navigation was interrupted by rapids, it needed the organising talent of an Amherst to adapt his means to the requirements of a fairly large force. Elsewhere there was absolute helplessness. When Braddock was preparing for his expedition to the Ohio, he was quite at his wits' end for transport, until Benjamin Franklin, who possessed that transcendent common sense which is called genius, took matters in hand and hired and organised his transport for him. It was not untill 1766 that Colonel Bouquet of the Sixtieth, on his return from the Muskingum, worked out the exact amount of supplies and transport required for a force of given strength in an expedition against Red Indians, giving the load of each ox-waggon or pack-horse somewhat in the style of our mobilisation tables of to-day. His book, which was printed in Philadelphia, is so rare that prob-

[1] Authorities in Simes's *Military Guide*.

ably few officers have seen it, though it is full of interest and instruction even for our own day.

Of the transport in the American War of Independence, the official despatches and the mountains of papers contained in the records of the War Office and Colonial Office mention hardly a word. Burgoyne, in his speech to the House of Commons, did indeed show that the impossible task set to him was rendered more impossible than ever, by the fact that he had to use a limited number of hired waggons to carry not only his supplies but also great numbers of boats, which he was obliged to bring forward through the forest against the day when he should reach the river Hudson and rely on water-transport only. It is also on record that a small British force, travelling by creeks and lagoons from Georgia to Carolina, lived for days together on oysters. But of the organisation of the transport literally not a word is said.

An important reform, however, was shortly to come. The hiring of teams for the artillery had long been found a great inconvenience, not only because of the indiscipline of drivers on the march, but because (as for instance at Fontenoy) they were apt to fly with their teams when things went amiss in action, and to leave the guns to take care of themselves. Trained drivers were therefore substituted for hired drivers in the artillery in 1794, being formed at first (except in the case of the Horse Artillery) as a distinct corps. This was followed, in 1794, by the formation of a corps of Royal Waggoners, which, however, did not survive the evacuation of the Low Countries in the same year. This corps consisted of five companies, each of 120 men, one-tenth of whom were artificers. But I strongly suspect it to have been little more than an ammunition-column for the artillery, which at that time began to expend powder and shot with a rapidity until then unknown. In any case, the corps was of little value, the men being the sweepings of the criminal population of London, and the very worst men in an

extremely ill-conducted army. Hence its life was deservedly short.

At about the same time also, Indian experience had been very distressing in the matter of transport. Hyder Ali had paralysed Eyre Coote by devastating the country round Madras, and carrying off all the oxen. Tippoo Sahib as nearly as possible brought Cornwallis to frightful disaster by the same means; and Seringapatam was only reached in 1792 by procuring native grain-dealers to follow the Army with their carts and grain. Much the same system seems to have been followed in 1799, and again in 1803, though Sir Arthur Wellesley appears to have eked out his transport with every description of animal, from the camel to the coolie. Improvisation was still the rule, and all depended upon the skill and prudence of the improviser.

At last, in 1799, there came a second serious attempt to form a special corps for Transport, with officers possessing rank as combatants, under the name of the Royal Waggon Train, which served throughout the Peninsular War. So far, however, as I have been able to gather (for information is difficult to find), this corps was used rather for the carriage of wounded and baggage than of supplies. It was, however, employed in the Helder Expedition of 1799, though very reluctantly, and indeed too late. In vain Sir Ralph Abercromby pointed out to Ministers from the first ("hoping that it was no crime to state the fact") that an army could not move without horses and waggons. The campaign was so contrived, by the combined talents of the Secretary for War and the Secretary for the Treasury, that the troops were sent out first, then the supplies, and last of all the transport. The result was that by the time when the Army had been starved out of the field and re-embarked, it was for the first time equipped for active operations.

The Waggon Train's functions in the Peninsula are obscure. In a memorandum of May 20, 1810, Wellington says outright that a regular Commissariat

establishment was quite new in the British service, and that the officers of the Commissariat were quite unacquainted with their duties. Nor can the poor men be blamed, for they were without experience and without instruction, excepting certain regulations from the Treasury, which were concerned chiefly with the keeping of accounts. "The great business of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army" wrote Wellington, "is to discover a mode of carrying on the business of this important department as much in conformity with the Treasury's instructions to the Commissary-General as possible." The fact is that for the first time the Commissariat found itself obliged to perform every item of the business of Transport and Supply for itself, instead of drawing cheques and leaving the detail to contractors. The Staff therefore required to be enormously increased, and the entire machinery to be improvised; in fact, by 1812 the Commissariat branch in the Peninsula numbered over seven hundred officers and men. We have it from the *Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, that by 1811 the system had been brought to the greatest perfection; but in truth it was not until 1813 that all had been adjusted so as to work smoothly, though even by 1811 much had been done. To every cavalry regiment mules were apportioned at the rate of about sixty to a regiment, to supply them with bread and forage. This evidently was much the same as the present Regimental Transport. To every division of infantry, likewise, mules were appointed; and here also we find something analogous to the regimental transport, for purposes both of fighting and subsistence, which was used in the field at the beginning of the South African War. Both in cavalry and infantry a distinction was drawn between baggage-mules and Commissariat-mules; the former being entirely under regimental control, the latter apparently being subject to the Commissariat Staff attached to each regiment and brigade and division. It is not quite clear whether the reserve-ammunition of the infantry was carried by the

regimental or the Commissariat's mules ; but it is certain that, if the *Diary of a Cavalry Officer* be correct, the number of Commissariat-mules attached to each regiment in 1812 was four times as great as in 1811. Probably the cavalry-officer was deceived by the fact that three-fourths of the mules were constantly occupied in replenishing the loads of those that accompanied the regiment. Besides this regimental and divisional transport, a large train was attached to the Commissary-General and to head-quarters, evidently as a Supply Park. The Waggon Train appears to have been little if at all concerned with such matters, for Wellington repeats again and again that the whole of his transport was carried on by Spanish mules and muleteers. Nevertheless, the hiring both of men and animals lay with the Commissaries, who in some cases enriched themselves not a little thereby.

The Royal Waggon Train lasted until 1833, when it was disbanded, having by that time become simply an ambulance train ; and the outbreak of the Crimean War found us in 1854, as in 1754, without any organisation for Transport and Supply. The results are too well known to need repetition ; but there was the less excuse for the general helplessness, since in 1846 Sir John Bisset, one of Wellington's Commissaries, had published a valuable little pamphlet upon the duties of the Commissariat, giving in brief form the lessons learned in the Peninsula, together with many instructive tables. To meet the immediate needs of the Army a Land Transport Corps was hastily improvised, and as hastily disbanded at the close of the war. In 1857 yet another service for Transport was formed, under the name of the Military Train, which was employed on active service in China and India. The corps fought gallantly as dragoons in India ; but it was otherwise a failure, as its Commandant, Colonel Clark Kennedy, confessed, because it was a service for Transport only, and not for both Transport and Supply. And this had been the defect alike of the Corps of Waggoners, the Royal Waggon Train, the Land Transport Corps, and the

Military Train, that they had dealt with one side of the difficulty only—namely, the organising and training of drivers, empty waggons, and teams into manageable units, thus divorcing responsibility for the load from responsibility for the waggon. To furnish supplies was the business of the Commissariat; to transport and deliver them the business of the Military Train; to account for them was once more the business of the Commissariat. "I cannot too strongly express my opinion," wrote Colonel Kennedy, "that any system based upon the provision of the food for the Army by the Commissariat, and its independent conveyance for issue by the Military Train, would result in failure in the field . . . in short, the two branches are so indissolubly united in the field that they must work together, and any attempt to work them independently and without accord would result in loss and injury to the service." This was practically the decisive word upon the subject. We had reached the eighth stage given in our initial summary. Mobility could only be assured by complete organisation, and no organisation could be called complete which made an officer of combatant rank answerable for the waggon, and another officer, who was despised as a civilian, answerable for the load.

Should that organisation be semi-military or military? The first decision was that it should be semi-military. By the scheme of Control in 1870, the departments of the Army, and among them of Transport and Supply, were united under one head; but the officers of the Transport were stripped of their combatant rank and reduced to the level of the officers of Supply. The scheme broke down, because the Controller, like the Commissary of the West Indian Expedition of 1695, enjoyed independent powers as great as the General. In 1875, the Commissariat and Transport, still wisely united, were erected into a separate corps, which, however, languished under discouraging conditions until 1880, when its status was improved and its name changed to the Commissariat and Transport Staff, with

a provision that its officers should have served not less than five years in the Line. Finally, in 1888, the Army Service Corps was formed under officers of combatant rank, taken from other branches of the service and specially trained in the theory and practice of their particular business. Thus the organisation was finally placed upon an essentially military footing, and the eighth stage of development was successfully passed.

The ninth stage followed rapidly upon it, namely, the tendency to render all *units* of the Army more mobile—that is to say, self-equipped. Now our Army has not yet quite outgrown, after two centuries and a half of painful struggle, its original form of a *congeries* of regiments. There are numbers of officers still serving who purchased their Commissions, and numbers of men still living who remember the days when not only was a regiment the property of the colonel, but the clothing of the men, out of a stoppage from their pay, might be a source of considerable emolument to him. If we go back still earlier, we find the independence and autonomy of regiments still more strongly marked; and such traditions can only be killed slowly (when it is right that they should perish) by the effluxion of time. Our Army, therefore, is still to some extent a mass of regiments only. To blink the fact is useless; it must be faced, and those who feel disposed to quarrel with it should remember that the Army owes its very existence, through many generations of discouragement and neglect, to regimental feeling and to the devotion, sometimes indeed narrow, but always unselfish, of regimental officers.

It was for these reasons that the regiment or battalion was selected, upon working out the details of mobilisation, as the lowest unit to be self-equipped. Hence arose the term Regimental Transport, our first division of Transport, which, as is well known, falls into two branches—the Fighting Transport for the conveyance of ammunition, entrenching tools, and the like; and the Subsistence Transport, carrying one or two days'

supply of food and forage for the unit. An officer, a sergeant, and (in a European war) drivers are furnished by the battalion or regiment for this Regimental Transport.

To replenish the first division there is a second division of Transport, called the Supply Column or Replenishing Transport, calculated also to carry from one to two days' supplies. These Supply Columns are organised for four distinct units,—Cavalry Brigade, Infantry Brigade, Divisional Troops, and Corps Troops, —each under the charge of a company of the Army Service Corps—that is to say, of trained men under trained officers, with all the necessary equipment of account-books, steelyards, butchering implements, and the like, for the services of Transport and Supply. The Supply Column therefore contains all the machinery for these services, so far as its unit is concerned, and has thus an importance of its own quite apart from its function as Replenishing Transport, which makes it the link between the first division and the third division.

This third division, technically called the Supply Park, is a Travelling Dépôt or Rolling Magazine, organised to carry at least three days' supply of food and forage for the men and animals of the Army. This, again, is under the charge of the officers, trained to the duties both of Transport and Supply, of the Army Service Corps.

It will be seen that, allowing for the difference of a moving and stationary population, the Regimental Transport is to an army what its store-cupboards are to each household in a town ; the Replenishing Transport corresponds roughly to the tradesmen's carts which deliver our food-supplies daily at our doors ; and the Rolling Magazine to the tradesmen's dépôts, to which their carts return, when empty, for a fresh load.

There is also a fourth division of Transport called Auxiliary Transport, which is designed to take the place of a railway where no railway exists from which the

Rolling Magazines can be replenished. It is organised in Companies under officers of the Army Service Corps.

Such, very briefly, is the principle upon which the services of Transport and Supply were based in 1898 to meet the requirements of war. There are, doubtless, details wherein improvement could be suggested at first sight; and it is possible that some changes are in contemplation, if not actually effected. But it is to be hoped that no reforms may ever lead us back to the primitive error of keeping the department of Transport distinct from the department of Supply.

THE END

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