THE MILITARY INSTITUTIONS OF FRANCE

DUC D'AUMALE

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THE

MILITARY INSTITUTIONS

OF

FRANCE.

BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUC D'AUMALE.

Translated and Annotated

(WITH THE AUTHOR'S CONSENT)

BY

CAPTAIN ASHE,

KING'S DRAGOON GUARDS.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages were written at Aldershot nearly two years ago; various causes have delayed their publication.

To the kindness of Lieutenant-General the Honourable Sir James Yorke Scarlett, K.C.B., the Translator is greatly indebted for access to some rare and useful military works of reference in French and German, contained in the Prince Consort's Library.

The problem of army administration promises to open as wide a field for discussion in our own

country as it has done in France; and it is to be hoped that this English version of the Duc d'Aumale's work, published by permission of His Royal Highness, may not be unacceptable to those who have not read it in its original form.

CAMBRIDGE HOUSE, PICCADILLY,

March 20, 1869.

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INTRODUCTION.

LOUVOIS—CARNOT—SAINT CYR.

About a hundred years ago Europe was somewhat surprised to learn that she possessed an additional military power, and that this power had crept into the front rank. It was not, as in the days of Gustavus Adolphus, a dazzling meteor flashing across an universal chaos only to disappear, after having filled the world with its brilliancy; it was the smallest, poorest, youngest of monarchies, fighting in succession the most celebrated armies. Not only did she gain victories, and know how to profit by them, but she was able, without entirely succumbing, to lose occasionally several points in the terrible game of war: she could bear up against reverses,

renew the struggle after defeat, and finally call back victory to her colours.

In the eighteenth century, when the solution of the most difficult problems was freely sought after, a phenomenon so remarkable could not appear without giving rise to the most diverse commentaries. In addition to those who simply paid homage to the genius and tenacity of Frederick, or who recognized in him a crowned philosopher, there were advocates for all the details of Prussian organisation and tactics; some praised the "oblique formation," others the iron ramrod; while some profound minds decided, that if we used the cane to our soldiers, we need never again fear the humiliation of Rosbach. All these were, to a certain extent, right and wrong; severe discipline, scientific evolutions, improved arms—all had their share in the success of the Prussian armies; but these were merely the elements, the component parts of a great whole; and it was this whole which it was necessary to grasp and study. The truth

was, that the large intellect of Frederick had found a powerful instrument, in the system of military institutions, merely sketched out by his predecessors, and which he developed, completed, and adapted to his age and country.

And when, in 1866, we saw the same power suddenly rise from a repose of fifty years, bring into play springs of action of which certain superficial observers doubted the elasticity and force, and finally obtain the most brilliant triumph that history had for years recorded, we began to exaggerate, after the victory, what, before it, we had undervalued; and appreciatory opinions were expressed, analogous to those called forth by the Seven Years' War. Many changes, of course, have taken place; that painful contortion which, but lately, was the despair of recruit and instructor, "the oblique step," is no longer in use; the "iron ramrod" is suited only for an antiquarian museum; and who now would venture to talk of using the cane? But still, in the present day, according to some

critics, success is only obtained by the practice of wheeling movements, by the electric telegraph, and by railroads: according to others it is the needle gun which has done all: "No more standing armies" is repeated by a numerous chorus; "we only want a landwehr."

Now, as it was a hundred years ago, our judgments err from being too exclusive, and, if we take only one side of a question, we see it imperfectly. It is simply requisite to start from too narrow a point of view to arrive at a false conclusion, and in the present case the error might carry us very far. It is unreasonable to attribute the recent victories of the Prussians to any particular branch of their military organisation; and it would be doing an injustice to the conqueror to seek in the excellence even of a system, the sole explanation of the events of last summer. The issue of the campaign of 1866 is attributable to many very different causes, of which some are obvious, others not sufficiently known, and which need not now be

dilated upon. What it concerns us to observe, and what we believe to be true, is, that if Prussia was able to bring, almost instantaneously, a considerable army into the field, well drilled, well commanded, completely provided, and, in default of experience, animated with the liveliest sentiment of honour; if she could operate simultaneously on the Elbe, on the Maine, and in Thuringia, and, while dispersing the levies of the Germanic Confederation, could invade Bohemia with troops, superior in number and organisation to the valiant and trained legions which Austria opposed to her, she owes this great result to military institutions which had been maintained, reorganised, and developed during peace.

Military institutions neither give nor guarantee victory; they supply the means of fighting, of conquering, or of supporting reverses. Without them, as long as the present state of European society exists, until we shall see that golden age, *pax perpetua*, which, according to Leibnitz, exists

only in "God's acre"—without them, we say, there is neither security nor true independence for nations. How are they founded? By what modifications can they be adapted to the age, and to the intelligence of the masses? How are they strengthened or weakened, purified or corrupted? How can they become an insupportable burden, an instrument of tyranny, or, assimilated to the customs of a people, be associated with public liberty, and form the groundwork of national power? We will endeavour to study this in the history of our country.

CHAPTER I.

LOUVOIS laid the foundation of our military system. Before him, no doubt, France did possess armies, valiant, national, often well commanded, and frequently victorious; but we may say that the FRENCH ARMY did not exist. For more than two hundred years the old feudal organisation had disappeared, without being replaced in any definitive manner. Charles VII. had instituted the "gendarmerie"* and the

* Up to the reign of Charles VII. the French cavalry was composed entirely of the nobility, called together as occasion required; but the many long and costly wars had rendered it latterly more difficult for the king to bring a sufficient number into the field. He therefore, in 1445, wishing to possess a corps available on every occasion, formed fifteen companies of men-at-arms, chosen for personal bravery and experience. Each company consisted of 100 lances, and each lance was attended by five fol-

"francs archers;"* but the remarkable edifice of ordonnances, built up by the house of Valois to mature these creations, soon crumbled away in the religious wars. The inventive and restorative genius of Henry IV. exerted over the military institutions of France the same salutary influence as over other branches of the public service. He was, however, cut off by death before he could put the finishing touch to his work, and army and regulations disappeared with him. In the month of May, 1610, he had brought together in Champagne 60,000 infantry, formed in compact regiments of 4000 men; his artillery

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lowers; viz., three archers, a "cutler," and a valet, making in each company 600 mounted men, and the fifteen companies forming a total of 9000 horsemen. To each company was appointed a captain, a lieutenant, an ensign, a standard-bearer, and a quartermaster. Thus officers and men numbered 9075. These officers were nobles of distinction, and the men-at-arms were gentlemen.

* The "francs archers," or free archers, so called from their exemption from taxation, were formed by Charles VII. in 1448, and broken up by Louis XI. in 1481. They were all, or nearly all, gentlemen; their duties were about the household of the sovereign; they were replaced in the reign of Louis XI. by the Swiss Guard.

was the most numerous, the most transportable, that had as yet been seen. His cavalry were well drilled and well mounted, and the fortresses and frontiers were munitioned. Before the end of the year, there remained but skeletons of regiments, pillaging bands, and empty arsenals: like snow in the sun, all had melted under the dissolving influence of court rivalry and intrigue. Then came Richelieu: without altogether completing anything, he provided for many deficiencies, and the reforms which he planned were vigorously carried out. In the midst of checks, reverses, and treasons, he continued his task, making trial of, and displacing, generals and administrators, until he found the instruments that suited him. His administration was marked by the suppression of the office of Constable, a useless encumbrance which hampered the supreme power of the prime minister; by the creation of comptrollers of justice and finance, who were the representatives, in the army, of order and law; by sound regulations regarding

pay and duration of service; by severe measures against "passe-volants,"* afterwards called "hommes de paille" (men of straw), deserters, thieves, &c. But after him, disorders, which he had not altogether stifled, reappeared. We still, indeed, continued victorious during the agitated regency of Anne of Austria, for Mazarin understood war as well as diplomacy, but his authority was too much disputed to allow him to administrate well. His hands were not very clean; he feared, and yet had need of the generals; he flattered, but did not wish to see them too powerful: it suited him to overlook many things, and a little confusion was not altogether displeasing. In short, Mazarin regulated nothing, founded nothing; and, under his government, the military institutions of Richelieu fell into desuetude.

About 1660, the king's guards, the squadrons of gendarmerie, and some regiments of infantry

* A "passe-volant" was a supposititious or borrowed soldier falsely mustered, in order that his pay might be drawn.

called "les vieux,"* composed the only standing army; the other corps of cavalry and infantry were formed at the commencement of each war, and given to the enterprise as a sort of concession. Formed for a special object, destined to serve on certain frontiers, often under the feudal authority of a particular prince or general, these regiments remained incorporated in the army only until the end of hostilities, or until an economical necessity caused them to be disbanded. To move them was a formidable undertaking. When, in 1643, the Duc d'Enghien succeeded in leading the army of Flanders into Germany, he gained almost as much applause as for the victory of Rocroi or for the taking of Theonville; and in 1647, Turenne appealed vainly to the Weymarians,† who had been under

* The six corps called "vieux" were the regiments of Picardy, Piedmont, Navarre, Champagne, Normandy, and the Marines. The first three were formed in 1562, the regiment of Champagne in 1575, that of Normandy in 1616, and the Marines in 1626.

† The Weymarians were a body of foreign troops consisting of Swedes, Danes, and Germans, chiefly cavalry, the remnant of the army of Gustavus Adolphus. Some years after the death of that

his orders for many years. He was actually compelled to charge down upon them to make them follow him from Germany into Flanders. Leaders of all ranks traded without shame, and in the same way, colonels, captains, and generals became contractors. In equipping a regiment, in maintaining an army, with what the king gave, many ruined themselves; others made large profits. Of those who benefited—the most scrupulous, or those who cared most for the public welfare, employed their profits for the good of the service; the majority, how-

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hero they entered the French service, under the command of Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar; hence their name. Turenne had served with them in his youth, and, after the death of Duke Bernard, they came under his command. In 1647, although much reduced in numbers by a long war, they still formed about one-third of Turenne's army. He was well known to them, admired and beloved; but when he ordered them to follow him from Germany to Flanders, they emphatically declined to obey, coolly packed up their baggage, saddled their horses, and officers and men, with their standards, left him in a body. Turenne allowed them to go, then called his French troops to arms, went on their track, and, waiting till he saw them marching carelessly through a defile, suddenly charged down on them. After some few were killed, finding themselves surrounded, they submitted.

ever, pocketed their gains. This was called "Griveler sur les gens de guerre" (a sort of military extortion), and no one attempted to find fault with the system. There were no rules for assuring the subsistence, clothing, or even arming of the soldier—no guarantee given him for the present or the future; officers, horsemen, foot soldiers, gentlemen, and peasants entered the service, quitted it, re-entered, and again left it, almost at will. There was no rule for promotion, and the duties of each rank were badly defined. There existed merely the outlines of a military hierarchy: generals often commanding, side by side, without recognizing on either side any superior authority. Hence arose extreme disorder, very relaxed discipline, great miscalculations as regarded the effective strength, without mentioning excesses and sufferings of all kinds, of which the engravings of Callot and several Flemish pictures give a striking idea. The artillery and fortifications were in the hands of contractors; officers and work-

men, all civilians, who held themselves bound by none of the duties of the military profession. If a siege had to be undertaken, captains and lieutenants who happened to possess a little knowledge or aptitude were sought in the infantry; they traced the attacks, and aided the general to direct the works and place the batteries. In return for this special duty they were merely exempted from their ordinary guards: the siege over, if neither killed nor wounded, they returned to their usual regimental duties. Sometimes, as an extraordinary recompense, they received a company in a veteran regiment; but a general, enjoying court favour, was alone able to obtain such a reward for those whom Vauban styled "Infantry-martyrs." For sole reserve, there was the communal militia, which existed little more than in name, and the "arrière ban,"*

* "Arrière ban," the convocation of the king's vassals for service. It was ordained by proclamation that all who owed allegiance to the crown were to appear on a fixed day, either mounted or on foot. Francis I. fixed their term of service at three months within the kingdom and forty days out of it. In the time of

or general levy of the nobles; the last vestige of a time for ever gone by. These were, in moments of danger, two very precarious resources, on which, long ere this, no reliance was placed. Everything regarding the army remained as an imperfect sketch. One only of Richelieu's institutions survived him: the office of Secretary of State for War was retained. This was the lever of which Louvois made use to accomplish a complete revolution. He threw the whole military power into the king's own hands. Between the chaos which existed before him and the order which he created the distance was immense; his work has been durable, and the military system which he founded was still in existence in 1792. This great reformer was not quite, however, what in the latter days of the Roman aristocracy

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Charles VII., and for long after, the office of Captain-General of the arrière ban existed: it was suppressed in 1576 by Henry III., re-established soon after, and finally done away with under Henry IV.; at least there is no mention of the office during the reign of Louis XIII. The arrière ban was called out for the last time in 1674, under the command of the Marquis de Rochefort.

would have been called a *novus homo*; and, when he set himself to his task, he had neither insult to avenge nor hatred of caste to satisfy. His family success, however, was of a recent date; his grandfather, a petty tradesman, and commissaire of one of the Parisian districts, had received from Mayenne, as a reward for his devotion to the League, the appointment of Maître des Comptes;* but his father was Secretary of State, and so much in favour, that in 1655 the young François Michel Letellier, the future Marquis de Louvois, was promised the reversion of his father's office. He was not yet fifteen, and was therefore, in some degree, educated for the duties he was destined to fulfil; and from childhood he had prepared himself for them by energetic application. In 1662, after the disgrace of Fouquet, he was authorized to sign himself Secretary of State. From this time the elder Letellier gradually retired, relinquishing

* "Maître des Comptes," a judge in the court for the revision of public accounts—"La cour des comptes."

to his son the conduct of military affairs. From study Louvois passed on to action, and his administration commenced. He began with settled opinions and technical knowledge of an enlarged nature, but did not bring with him any ready-made system. Without endeavouring to form all at once the army and its different branches, he applied himself to modify, suppress, and regulate, as fast as necessity arose; making use of all the instruments at his disposal, and not changing them until they were found worthless or worn-out; proceeding with method, having always a definite object in view, and not destroying merely to reconstruct.

If we cannot recognize in him a military Sieyès, neither can we put him on the same rank with Richelieu; the latter would be assigning to Louis XIV. a part not his own. There are certain premature apotheoses, ephemeral flatteries, of which history keeps no account; but the epithet of "great," so often lavished by hired panegyrists, she has granted to

few men, but when thus given, she has recorded the title incontestably.—Posterity continues to say, "Louis the Great," and it is a decision we may accept as final.

Sharing his master's ideas, animated by the same passions, carried away by the same tendencies, Louvois was more than a clerk, never more than a minister. Sometimes a disagreeable servant, too often a complaisant one, merciless to rogues, pitiless to the people; brutal, cruel, but incorruptible; he established, in the military profession, that centralisation which influenced all France. His first care was to consolidate his own powers; the contracts for lodging, pay, rations, and hospitals had been hitherto in the charge of the Comptroller-General; were taken from him: the fortification department, hitherto divided among the various Secretaries of State, he concentrated also in his own hands: at a later period he created the Military Record Office; and for his own glory, never did his love of order and method give

him a better inspiration. Had he not ordered the mass of despatches and minutes which accumulated to be preserved and classified, we should not have had the admirable work M. Rousset has devoted to him, and which has made us so intimately acquainted with the man and his labours. Two Directors-General, Saint Pouange and Chamlay, shared the details of the administration, of the *personnel*,* and of the military operations. The confusion which existed between the different branches of the profession ceased, and it may be said, that, for the first time, the principle of division of labour was applied to war. The artillery were formed in troops; the deputies of the "Grand Maître"† were appointed officers, and the engineers were

* A branch of the War Office corresponding somewhat to the department under the supervision of the Military Secretary in England.

† The office of "Grand Maître de l'Artillérie," created under the Valois, was a direct charge from the crown, and analogous to the office of "Master-General of Ordnance," which existed in the English army up to the 25th of May, 1855. This department was then amalgamated with the Horse Guards.

organised. With or without special title, each arm of the service had its Inspector-General, who established and maintained uniformity in the duties and instruction. Martinet for the infantry, Fourille for the cavalry, Dumetz for the artillery, and for fortification, he whose name our readers must have already anticipated —he whose friendship (as M. Rousset has well said) protects the memory of Louvois; the man of genius, and pre-eminently good man, Vauban.

Discipline was maintained in every grade of the military hierarchy. Not only were deserters, "passe volants," and other obscure defaulters, hunted down with a severity which the new organization rendered more efficacious, but even the higher ranks were subjected to regulations hitherto unknown, and which, at all times, are difficult to enforce. When several marshals happened to be present in the same army, they were compelled to obey one selected by the king; immediate disgrace served as an example to those who were reluctant to submit. The

general officers were promoted by seniority, and took their duties according to the "roster." Whoever has opened a volume of Saint Simon will remember all the lamentations that such measures called forth from the pride of duke and peer. Making every allowance for the prejudices and bitterness of a discontented noble, it must be admitted that his criticisms were not without foundation. Convenient for the ruling power, that found itself thus freed from all importunities and embarrassment, this system had practically many grave inconveniences; it was favourable to mediocrity, responsibility was divided, the duration of command was uncertain, and, while putting an end to disorder, the principle was carried too far. The colonels-general were abolished, or deprived of prerogatives which had become exorbitant; no more officers were appointed, except under the king's seal, and all ranks found themselves under the surveillance of the minister. Written accounts of the behaviour and ability of each

officer were kept at the War Office; and while protected from the caprice of their superiors, acts of trickery or oppression, of which they themselves were guilty towards their soldiers, were severely punished. The axe being once placed to the root of the tree, Louvois should have struck with more force; he should have suppressed the purchase of promotion; but he allowed it to remain. Contenting himself with taxing each rank, and with exacting certain conditions of admission, he must have wished to open the door of military honours to the middle classes, and to close it to the more ignorant of the nobility. He even tried an institution which would somewhat correspond to our military colleges, and he instituted companies of cadets, the entrance to which was rendered easy. Here were taught professional details, drill, and mathematics. Time, however, was wanting to the minister to develop those ideas, or to superintend their execution: they resulted in nothing, and the companies were disbanded; a sort of

novitiate, however, was imposed on all who aspired to the rank of colonel, and the accident of birth exempted none. To attain to this grade a service of at least two years was necessary either in one of the corps which were considered as models, and the direct command of which the king reserved to himself, in the regiment of infantry which bore his name, or in his military household.*

* It had long been the custom of the kings of France, whenever a new militia was raised, to attach a portion of such to the Royal Guard. Charles VII. retained for this purpose two companies of the new Gendarmerie. He also took two companies of another militia, called the *Chevaux Légers*, to form the French and Scotch archers of the guard. Henry IV., in the same manner, placed in his guard a company of *Gendarmerie* and a company of *Chevaux Légers*. Under the same king the militia called the *Carabins* was augmented, and Louis XIII. formed the celebrated *Mousquetaires* from a company of the latter corps. Under Louis XIV. the "Maison du Roi" consisted of the *Gardes du Corps*, the *Gendarmes*, the *Chevaux Légers*, the *Mousquetaires*, the *Gendarmerie*, and the *Grenadiers à cheval*. These were all essentially horsemen, and, with the exception of the last corps, all gentlemen. The Gardes Françaises and Gardes Suisses were special infantry regiments, and might theoretically belong to the royal household, but the "Maison du Roi" virtually consisted of the troops above mentioned. The Cent Suisses did only internal duty in the palaces.

The remodelling of the *maison du roi* was one of Louvois' most ingenious conceptions. The corps composing it were not restricted to the simple duties of escort and ante-chamber. They were increased to about 4000 men, although, in spite of the luxury of the court, 800 was sufficient for the King's Guard. It was, at the same time, a cavalry of *élite*, a training-school for officers, and an institution which replaced the last remnants of feudalism. The "arrière ban" had been called out only once under Louis XIV., and seemed to have been mustered merely to show its inefficiency. It was only a mob, badly mounted, scarcely armed, incapable of either obeying or of fighting, and there was nothing left but to disband it immediately. As regards the military power, this was the end of the old *régime*, and, to deal it a final blow, Louvois replaced the obligatory service—the shallow pretext for many an aristocratic privilege—by a fiscal measure of exoneration. To those who preferred paying with their blood, the "King's Household" was

still open. They entered the Musketeers, Body Guard, or Gendarmes. The tests for admission to these corps were not very severe; in fact, one of them, the "Grenadiers à cheval," was composed of veteran soldiers; patricians and plebeians were here united in a fellowship of arms. The household troops did not retain all the characteristics with which Louvois wished to endow them; but to the end of their career they distinguished themselves by every form of courage. The same drawing-room exquisites, who carried Valenciennes in broad daylight by an act of unheard-of audacity, held their post at Senef as stoically as the most tried veterans. "The insolent nation!" exclaimed the Prince of Orange, on seeing at Nierwinden the line of red and blue squadrons stagger under the storm of bullets, and close up without giving way. At Steenkirk the same troops decided the battle, and, when bad times came, at Malplaquet, their charge swept through the three lines of the enemy. The last brilliant victory of the old monarchy was also their last

feat of arms : it was they who at Fontenoy threw themselves into the breach opened by Lally's cannon, and overthrew the powerful column of the Duke of Cumberland.

The household troops formed an efficient reserve to the cavalry of the line, but a national light cavalry was still wanting. Louvois supplied this deficiency by the dragoons, to whom he added troops furnished with rifles. The dragoons and carabineers of to-day would hardly recognize their military ancestors. The proportion of mounted troops, although still considerable, was decreased. In 1678, out of a total effective of about 280,000 men, there were 50,000 cavalry and 10,000 dragoons. The muster-roll of infantry was always on the increase : it was this branch that Louis XIV. and his minister wished not only to augment, but to raise and improve. The king had decided on inscribing himself on the list of colonels ; his regiment, we have said, and the Gardes Françaises were intended to serve as models for the instruction of

the rest of the service. They had several battalions, and their companies were strong; circumstances, however, did not permit the general application of these two principles: other regiments remained with one battalion, and rather weak companies, but they became permanent; were restricted by regulations in their clothing, and, above all, in their arms, which were much improved, although the great reform, the adoption of the bayonet musket, was not accomplished until later. Almost a third of the infantry were Swiss and Germans; but the former had for two centuries been in a manner incorporated with our ranks; while the latter, inhabiting the Rhenish provinces, had in France the rights of denizens. At that time, with the exception of some insignificant and immaterial privileges, neither the foreign regiments, nor those of the king, the princes, nor the guards, were distinguished from the other corps: they performed the same duties, obeyed the same generals. The real *élite* of the infantry remained in their respective regiments.

On the right of each battalion, under the command of an officer of fortune, were placed the bravest and most robust soldiers; they wore on the shoulder that piece of red worsted since rendered illustrious by so many actions, and which they wear to this day: these were our Grenadiers. The same discipline was applied to all, and the minister's hand was even seen in all the details of regimental interior economy. The time had not yet arrived when all this could be done directly by the state. Commanders of corps still retained that responsibility which made them to a certain extent contractors; but, so strict was the surveillance exercised over them that, actual profit was no longer possible, while for the poor or negligent ruin was almost certain. This severity of the minister was, of course, bitterly complained of. With the funds sent by the king for pay, with distributions in kind, and a contribution which, under the name of "ustensile,"* was im-

* "Ustensile" was the accommodation due by the landlord to each soldier billeted upon him. Sometimes "ustensile" was

posed upon such communities as were compelled to lodge the troops, the colonels and captains had to victual, clothe, and equip the men, and to pay them every ten days. Woe to those who illegally retained any portion of such funds, or who, on review days, borrowed men or arms for the sake of concealing the weakness of their effective, or the bad state of their companies! This was not all: recruits had to be found; but on this point Louvois was not troublesome; to enlist them officers could, almost with impunity, resort to either violence or roguery. The moment those so-called volunteers were brought under the colours, they had to remain four years. There was no restriction as to height—it was sufficient that neither vagabonds, children, nor impostors were presented, and, at a later period, even greater facilities were afforded. It was necessary to resort to "bataillons de salades,"*

furnished in money, and paid by the inhabitants of the place where the troops were quartered.

* The "bataillons de salades" were originally the regiments of provincial militia called out to defend the frontier in 1668. This

"levées d'enfants," and "pauvres petits misérables," to thus reap the young generations in the bud. Louvois himself lived long enough to see the inefficiency of the system of "racolage,"* or "crimping." He had not from the beginning held in much esteem the ancient institution of the militia, the system of which he found badly defined, looked upon as forgotten, and placed on a par with the "arrière ban." On this account he had willingly accepted the money which the estates of Languedoc and others offered instead of

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sobriquet was applied to them by the old soldiers from the *salades*, or casques of their fathers, with which many of them were equipped. The proportion was fixed at one man in every district paying 2000 livres in taxes. Later, to complete the requisite number, mere boys were often furnished. Hence the expressions "Levées d'enfants" and "Pauvres petits misérables."

* By a decree in 1692 Louis XIV. ordained that no soldier should be enrolled except by voluntary enlistment. The officers were compelled, however, to resort to all sorts of subterfuges to obtain recruits. Deceit, debauch, and even force, were employed. Men were entrapped during the day and hidden in places called "fours" until the night, when they were taken and handed over to the captains. The Quai de la Ferraille, in Paris, was long celebrated for *racolage*, as this species of kidnapping was called.

contingent; but when war broke out everywhere, north and south; men, and the framework of corps, were wanting for the line. The provinces supplied regiments of militia, composed at first of unmarried volunteers, and afterwards completed by drawing lots, clothed and equipped by their own parishes, and commanded by country gentlemen. This gave from 25,000 to 30,000 men, who served principally in Italy, and behaved creditably. In the eyes of the minister this calling out of the militia was but an expedient; it is very doubtful whether he ever thought, by making it permanent, to find therein the elements of any reorganisation of our military system; but whatever were his projects, he was not allowed time to execute them: he died almost at the moment when Catinat for the first time led the provincial troops into action.

If, in spite of his energy and boldness, Louvois seemed to hesitate in employing certain radical measures to complete his work, he recognized no obstacles to the impulse given to two ser-

vices which in his hands became united—the supreme administration of war and the department of fortification. With the advice and concurrence of Vauban, with the assistance of several superintendents, active, ingenious, vigilant, and uncompromising as himself—such men as Robert, Jacques, and Berthelet—he was not content with only reforming, he created. The frontier provinces, both old and new conquests, were covered with citadels, magazines, barracks, and hospitals; their resources in numbers, provisions, and material of all kinds, were confiscated, sometimes cruelly, often harshly, but always promptly and methodically. Each country entered by our columns, was immediately taken possession of by the engineers and commissariat; provisions were seized and accumulated; old buildings thrown down, and others raised. The scourge of war appeared heavier to the people, and if the evils it brought with it were not everywhere aggravated, their weight was felt more continuously and more uni-

formly. The condition of the soldier, however, was improved—his food, clothing, and shelter were thought of; this was a new state of things. Meanwhile the augmentation in numbers, and the concentration of the troops, brought back some of the sufferings which foresight had hitherto provided for. The reports of the inspectors speak constantly of soldiers "half naked, without shoes, and lodged like pigs; alarmingly thin and wan." But some progress was made, for these evils were noticed and remedies sought for. While on this point, we must not forget that Louis XIV. and Louvois saved the infirm and wounded soldiers from misery, and opened to them the Hôtel des Invalides. *Points d'appui*, solid bases and well provided depôts were now found in military operations. The latter attained a magnitude and duration hitherto unknown. We could, at the commencement of a campaign, threaten on all sides, choose our point of attack, begin by dealing the most unexpected blows, advance or retreat

without perishing of hunger, find shelter in case of reverse, or check the progress of a victorious enemy. We no longer possess all the fortresses constructed or rebuilt in the reign of Louis XIV.; many that are still in our possession have no longer the same importance; but we owe gratitude to those who encircled our frontier with this formidable belt. No! the money employed by Vauban, with so much probity and genius, has not been thrown away on ornament. Let those who have any doubt on this subject peruse again the history of the campaigns of 1713 and of 1793; twice have our strongholds saved France.

We have summed up, in a few pages, the work which it took thirty years of unremitting labour to accomplish. We have said enough to explain with what toil this great mechanism was first put together, how complicated were its wheels, and by what tie every part of it was connected together. As far as could be seen, there were, in this great whole, certain portions

already perfect, others only in the rough, many germs yet undeveloped, some excessive measures, and several important deficiencies. It would be superfluous to go further into details. We will endeavour, however, to show as briefly as possible what such an instrument became in the hands of a prince and of a minister who knew no curb to their will, whatever use or abuse they made of it.

Their first important enterprise was the war in Holland. Louvois had already, for ten years, directed the war administration, when, on the 17th of February, 1672, he placed in the king's hands a detailed statement, of which the total amounted to 91,000 foot soldiers, 28,000 cavalry, and 97 guns; it was the state of a complete army, liberally provisioned; ready to march and to fight. A few days later this imposing mass was put in motion. By a happy combination of administration and diplomacy, rations and magazines were provided in advance, and never before had there been such a display of

power and ability united. Holland, invaded and conquered, soon asked for peace, and offered conditions which surpassed even the patriotic dreams of Henry IV. or of Richelieu. But the same arrogance, the same passions, inflamed both king and minister; they understood each other too well—the one counselled, and the other decided, to reject every proposal. This was the inauguration of that policy of extremes which under other leaders was one day to prove so fatal to us. It is true the punishment was less terrible, but the lesson was severe and soon given. The Dutch recovered themselves by a heroic sacrifice: our troops having to struggle against the waves, the inhabitants, and the rigours of winter, retired in a ruined state; Europe came to the rescue of the oppressed as soon as the latter had repulsed the aggressor, and France found herself opposed by a coalition. She was not exhausted, showed a bold front to the storm, and fought six campaigns, the most brilliant perhaps of our history; a dazzling

testimony to the value of Louvois' creations. In the first instance our army was concentrated, reorganised, and reinforced. The enemy fell into a mistake, and misjudged this retrograde movement. The allies thought themselves already in the heart of the kingdom; and they already talked of fêting the ladies at Versailles; they had a well-merited confidence in their troops, and in their generals, William and Montecuculli. To these great men, Louis XIV. opposed worthy adversaries, Condé and Turenne. The one unmasked the great plan of the allies, and by force of a well-chosen position, held for a long time the Prince of Orange in check; finally, took him *in flagrante delicto*, and paralysed him by the sanguinary battle of Senef. The other, opposed to one of the coolest calculators, and most subtle intellects that Italy ever produced, undermined all his plots and baffled his schemes; prudent by temperament, and become audacious by calculation, he marched incessantly; crossing and recrossing the Rhine

and the Vosges; covering himself sometimes by river, sometimes by mountain; gaining battle upon battle and combat after combat — Sinzheim, Entzheim, Mulhouse, and Turckheim! When these two heroes quitted the scene, Turenne to descend into the vault of Saint Denis, Condé to shut himself up in his retreat, Créqui and Luxembourg succeeded their teachers, and marched in their footsteps, but without encountering the same difficulties. The allies had become more diffident; they now stood upon the defensive. Louis XIV. took a number of towns; this had become the great object of the war, for now everybody thought of peace; the army worked for the diplomatists who, like chess players, wanted to clear the board and hold the pieces in their hands; above all, it was necessary to put the frontiers in a ring fence (*faire le pré carré**). Men and means were fully

* "Faire le pré carré," literally, to make the meadow square, the great desideratum with all small French freeholders. It was Vauban who applied this expression to the kingdom, saying on

supplied to engineers or generals. The effective strength in 1678 had reached 280,000 men; not one place could resist Vauban, and those he had remodelled became almost impregnable. Everything justified the foresight of Louvois. Our cavalry, who had felt some apprehension of the Emperor's cuirassiers, now charged them wherever they met. Our infantry was unequalled: surprised at Saint Denis, near Mons, overwhelmed by numbers, they sustained and recovered the battle by their steadiness. This gloomy struggle was the last episode of the war: it was fought by two generals who had each in his possession the news of the peace. Battle was offered by William with the savage hatred he bore to the French, and accepted by Luxembourg with that cold-blooded indifference which then tarnished all his brilliant qualities. A trumpet sent with a white hand-

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one occasion to Louvois, "The king ought to think only of making his meadow square."

kerchief would have saved the lives of five or six thousand men.

Humanity was not learnt in the school of Louvois; not that he was the originator of those horrible devastations, the memory of which has been associated with his name: the "dégât,"* as it was called, was long ere this customary in the practice of war, and the burning of the Palatinate does not surpass in horror the ravages committed in Burgundy by the army of Gallas during the invasion of 1636; but the minister of Louis XIV. inaugurated another system in the art of destruction, and which he carried out everywhere. It was part of his administration—and the commissaries, to whom it became as natural to ruin a province as to subsist a regiment, manifested the same blind zeal in the execution of barbarous orders as they showed in the accomplishment of their habitual duties.

* The term "dégât," in the old French wars, was often used to express the laying waste of an enemy's country. The word "incendie" has been applied more to the devastation of the Palatinate."

Easy-going generals like Luxembourg laughed freely at a "brûlerie;" while the more serious, like Turenne, and even the austere Catinat, permitted such things without remark; one only, to his eternal honour, protested: this was Condé. There were several unfortunate countries, such as the Palatinate, Waes, and Breisgau, particularly marked out for such miseries; and Louvois looked on complacently at these horrors. Two months before the peace of Nimèguen, on his return from a journey beyond the Rhine, he sent word to his father, with a sort of ferocious satisfaction, "Nothing can equal the ruin of this country which the king restores to the emperor: it is entirely desert and laid waste. Out of ten villages there scarcely remain two, containing one or two inhabited houses." Alas! it was not only against himself that Louvois, by such acts, aroused just maledictions; he sowed throughout Europe a bitter hatred to the French name.

To the cruelties of war succeeded the rapacity of peace. What our government were not able

to obtain by the treaty of Nimèguen it laid hold of by means of "reunions," "pacific executions." They would be called in these days "annexations," "federal executions," "seizures of material guarantees." In this manner Louvois took possession of Strasbourg (let us forgive him for that), of Casal, of Luxembourg, &c. One of the reasons which induced him to occupy, either permanently or temporarily, so many places, was the necessity of providing for a deficiency which, already at that time, came under the head of "extraordinary," omitting only the single word "budget." The mode of covering military disbursements by loans was not yet customary; the great art was to make the enemy, or at least a foreign country, support such burdens. Without, however, disorganizing anything, even while retaining the means of executing the mock decrees of the Metz Parliament, or of the Supreme Council of Brisach, the expenditure could have been diminished and the effective reduced. How, therefore, were so many troops

employed?—In turning the river Eure and in "dragonnades."*

To what extent can men drawn for, or enlisted as, soldiers be employed in other duties than those strictly military? In those which relate even to fortifications or military roads; what is the limit, especially during peace? It is a difficult problem to solve. If we allow that this work gains for the troops better pay, a more liberal scale of diet, or an increase in vigour or welfare, the question need not be so thoroughly sifted; at least the principle may be more willingly admitted; but, when we see a whole army kept for two years in marshes, where they are decimated by fever, to make ornamental waterworks, we seem carried back to the time of the Pharaohs. As to the "dragonnades," this word alone recurring

* "Dragonnades," a term applied by the Protestants to the persecutions they experienced under Louis XIV. and his successors, in consequence of the dragoons being the first soldiers billeted amongst the Protestant communities to enforce the measures taken against their faith.

revives indignation that seemed exhausted. It is necessary, however, to go into the question; Louvois had, by a reprehensible perversion of his powers, connected the war department with the affairs of the "réformés;" and it must be remembered what, in a military point of view, were the consequences of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It caused 8000 or 9000 of our best sailors, 5000 or 6000 good officers, 19,000 or 20,000 of our most tried soldiers, to go over to the enemy. This was not all; the regiments, broken up to convert or chastise the Protestants, soon degenerated into mere bands. In this Louvois' conduct was inexcusable: free from all religious zeal, from all ardour of proselytism; actuated only by the fever of despotism, he was an urgent instigator, a passionate instrument. He advised the measure, furnished the means, caused the exile and the military persecutions; and this great disciplinarian so far forgot himself as to recommend to the soldiers "as much disorder as possible."

It was with the malingerers taken from the camp of Maintenon, with the plunderers brought back from Poitou and Languedoc, that he had to face a coalition, the fruit of our insolent policy, to fight on the Rhine, in Flanders, and in Ireland (1688). The commanders requested to know what they were to do with troops "who would melt away at the first trial." The minister paid no attention to those remarks. He would not see that he had undermined the edifice erected with his own hands: in addition to which, he hoped to inaugurate a new system of war, free from hazards, battles, and forced marches; where would be seen only encampments laid out beforehand, sieges calculated at a fixed hour, bombardments and devastations. He placed a boundless reliance on the merits of centralization, which no doubt he had done well in applying to military affairs (there at least no one can blame him), but in which, however, he ended by going too far. He could not bear being brought into contact with generals worthy

of the name; he was not satisfied with keeping them in subjection; he wished to annihilate them, and resented their opposition to the direct relations which he wished to establish with their subaltern officers, and their resistance to the unlimited powers with which he had armed the commissaries. Freed from Turenne by a bullet, and from Condé by gout; he saw the doors of the Bastille close upon Luxembourg, who had retained a certain independence of manner justified by his birth and genius. Créqui, who was also to be thought of, had just died. Louvois never seriously contemplated replacing any of them. Infatuation, and the partiality for subservient men, those two canker-worms of despotism, warped his judgment. With the Cabinet tacticians, engineers, purveyors, and generals who were his mouthpieces at the head of the troops, he thought nothing more was wanting. Two years' experience taught him the truth of this well-known axiom, that the plans of a campaign can only be tested by their execution. Every-

thing went badly. Fortunately our prestige still protected us, and some few feats of arms consoled our *amour propre*, but we gave way on all sides; our danger increased each day with the number of our enemies, who were augmented by fresh alliances, and by the fury of the inhabitants, who flew to arms to revenge our burnings and devastations. It was necessary to put the kingdom under pressure; to use double violence in finding men and money; it was requisite, in short, to put Luxembourg again on horseback, and to thank the minister's lucky star that enabled him to lay his hand upon Catinat.

Freely, boldly interpreted by these two illustrious captains, instead of being taken literally, as they had been by Messieurs d'Humières, de Lorges, or de Duras, the instructions sent from Versailles produced other results. Staffarde and Fleurus, names dear to France, were added to the list of our victories (1690). These were the last joys of Louvois. He died the following year, broken down by toil, by cares,

and by the burden of an enormous responsibility.

He was not spared the hatred which he merited, for he had inflicted great evils; but the clamours, the echoes of which still pursue his memory, are not all genuine. With the mournful cries of exiled Huguenots, trampled nations, devastated provinces, were united the calumnies of exposed intriguers, of discontented nobles, and detected rogues. He was also regretted, for his successors did not rise above mediocrity; and it was imagined that, had he lived, many calamities would have been spared to the nation. He had, however, more than any one, contributed to the misfortunes of the reign. By his home and foreign policy he had compromised the results of his administration. In pursuing the chimera of religious unity he had disturbed national union. More than Jacobite infatuation, more than the quarrel of the Spanish succession, his usurpations, and the contempt he openly manifested for all rights, had raised Europe against

us; and if Louis XIV. in his old age employed "generals from predilection, fancy, or caprice;" and if he allowed himself to be too often influenced by their "adulation, servility, and, above all, apparent self-abnegation,"* this was the consequence of habits formed by his minister of state. The crushing despotism everywhere pursued lowered the standard of humanity and broke the springs of individuality. But in the midst of many errors, Michel Letellier had given to the army so strong a framework, had surrounded our ill-defined frontier with so solid a rampart, that the fury of our enemies exhausted itself against the resistance of France. The institutions of Louvois gave to Louis XIV. and to Villars the means of repelling invasion. This we can never forget.

* The words between inverted commas are from Saint Simon's Memoirs.

CHAPTER II.

Louvois created the royal army, Carnot constituted the national one. We have not to judge the acts of his political life, our task is simply to recall his services. He gave the widest basis to our mililary institutions, and put in practice principles, which, sooner or later, must be adopted. He "organised victory" without sacrificing liberty, and, in spite of his faults, we will not deny to him that sublime eulogium, which he had accustomed the French soldier to consider as the highest reward: "He has deserved well of his country."*

* "Il a bien merité de la patrie" was the formula of the decrees by which the Convention acknowledged the services of military men.

A few touches added to the picture we have drawn of the army of Louis XIV. will be sufficient to describe that of Louis XVI. The reform so boldly, and at first, so happily tried by the latter prince in the monarchical system generally, did not extend to the military branches of it. Louvois' institutions still remained, improved, no doubt, in certain parts, but attacked by a sort of general decline, and infected by new abuses.* The system of *racolage* was not yet abandoned; the provincial militia which, during the Seven Years' War, had received a certain development, and had rendered real service, had been again neglected; besides this, the arbitrary manner in which the drawing by lot was practised had rendered this institution unpopular, and the greater number of the requests of the States-General called for its suppression. The 166 regiments of the line, in-

* The "Cahiers des Etats généraux" were a species of memoranda given by the electors to the deputies, showing the points which the former wished to be brought forward for deliberation in the Assembly.

fantry and cavalry, presented but a weak effective; these troops, however, were well drilled. An excellent code of regulations, elaborated at the camp of Saint Omer, promulgated in 1791, and, though perhaps too servilely copied since then, still serves as the foundation of our present manœuvres, and the instructors formed at this time were found of great service at a later period. Generals and superior officers were far too numerous; some few were well taught and painstaking, but nearly all without experience. For a long while peace had only been disturbed by the American war, which was of a peculiar character, and gave employment but to few. In the corps of artillery, and that of the engineers, nothing was left to be desired, and the material formed by Gribeauval was the best in Europe. The military schools, organised for fifty years, and maintained during all kinds of vicissitudes, had profited peculiarly in these special branches, while they at the same time raised the standard of knowledge in the whole service.

The spirit of caste which reigned among the officers was more than ever exclusive. With perhaps certain exceptions which proved the rule, the door of military honours was closed to those who were not, or who did not claim to be, gentlemen; notwithstanding which, this brilliant aristocracy, always brave, generous, and devoted, had, during the eighteenth century, furnished fewer generals than at other epochs of the Monarchy: hence a certain discredit, widely spread, but in many respects unjust, was attached to it, and touched it in its most sensitive point.

It will be understood what an effect the thunderclap of 1789 produced in an army thus composed; into what disorder it was thrown, on one side by revolutionary agitations, and on the other by emigration. The privileged corps, the regiment of French Guards at Paris, and that of the king at Nancy, gave an example which had many imitators. The Constituent Assembly had every intention of maintaining

discipline; but, in the heat of the struggle, this illustrious body could not always act in accordance with its principles, and it was powerless to re-establish order. It was proclaimed that all grades were open to every Frenchman, but no effective measures were taken to reorganise the regimental staffs and officers. The question of recruiting was agitated; but out of respect for individual liberty, obligatory service was not imposed upon the citizens, and recruiting by bounty was retained.* Absorbed in other duties, and placing their confidence in the recent institution of the National Guard, the deputies gave but little attention to military affairs. Meanwhile war broke out, and it became necessary to recognize the weakness of the army and the inefficiency of its mode of recruiting. The

* Among other arguments, the opponents of obligatory recruiting brought to notice that aptitude for military duties was by no means uniform throughout the French population; in fact, in the fifteen northern districts, one soldier was found in every 149 inhabitants, and in the sixteen districts of the south one only in every 279.

Assembly called upon the nation, who responded enthusiastically by furnishing volunteers.

At the commencement of the revolutionary war the forces of France were as follows :—

One hundred and five regiments of infantry of the line, of two battalions each.

Fourteen battalions of chasseurs (light infantry).

Two hundred battalions of volunteers.

Fourteen battalions of artillery, to which must be added a few troops of light artillery.

Twenty-four regiments of heavy cavalry.

Eighteen regiments of dragoons.

Twelve regiments of chasseurs à cheval (light cavalry).

Six regiments of hussars.

The above represented many regiments, but few men; the artillery in particular, numerically small but excellent, had preserved their corps of officers almost intact. The troops of the line

were, we have said, well drilled; they were principally commanded by their former non-commissioned officers. The volunteers, recruited from all classes, were the flower of the nation, their officers, chosen by election, gave much hope for the future: some of them had seen service, and many were men of action and merit; but for the time, military habits and instruction were equally wanting in the soldiers and in most of the officers. Distinguished by a higher rate of pay, and by their blue uniforms, the National Guard on active service, obtained in their noviciate little assistance from the line, who manifested towards them a certain amount of jealousy. Among the generals placed at the head of the armies, some were too old, while others owed their employments to political intrigues; very few of them were accustomed to service, or possessed the confidence of their subordinates. The ensemble, as we see, was far from homogeneous, and the first incidents of the war proved disastrous; panics and revolts suc-

ceeding each other with alarming rapidity. In spite of this, however, the regiments of the line regained their equilibrium, and at the camp of Maulde the volunteers learned the elements of their new calling. In a short time the happy audacity of Dumouriez, the firmness of Kellermann, and the steadiness of the troops at Valmy, arrested the first onslaught of the enemy. The Prussians fell back, and the French profited by the confusion into which this retreat threw the coalition. The Austrians were beaten at Jemmapes, Belgium and Savoy were conquered, the tricolour floated over the walls of Mayence, and the memorable year 1792 ended in the midst of successes as brilliant as unexpected.

There are not wanting those who would wish to drop the curtain after the entry of Dumouriez into Holland, and that of Custine into Frankfort. Let us suppose, for example, that some good genius had terminated all at this glorious period—that Prussians and Austrians had henceforth held themselves irretrievably vanquished.

With a little effort of imagination, and putting aside certain essential circumstances, we might then believe that a warlike people could, by the force alone of their enthusiasm, repel an unjust invasion, and carry the war into the territory of the aggressor. As a logical consequence we should abrogate the laws for recruiting and promotion, and reduce the peace establishment to the maintenance merely of a certain amount of stores, and of a few thousand soldiers by profession. Should danger menace, a skilled general would appear as the Deus ex machinâ, the National Guard would not fail him, and for the rest, "Let God protect France!"

But let us glance at the opening of the following campaign, and nothing remains of this Utopia. From the beginning of 1793, the army of the Rhine was thrown back on the Lauter, and that of the North was driven out of Belgium. With reverses and defections came back distrusts and distinctions of origin; the attempts at promotion, according to "seni-

ority of service," produced the most curious results. No progress was made in organisation or cohesion; the proscription was blind, and the changes in the command were frequent; there was a continuous shower of generals, more and more feeble. Within a short space of time, the army of the Rhine had for its chief, a provisional commander who refused to issue any order, and whom neither entreaty nor threat could induce to abandon an absolute silence; then an old captain brought from a dépôt, whose plan of campaign was confined to drawing up battalions from right to left in numerical order; and finally another, who to every question replied, "The march of the troops must be majestic and in mass," he himself never marching at all. Add to this the revolutionary armies in rear, and the continual intervention, often inopportune, of the "représentants," commissioned by the Assembly, and an idea may be formed of the confusion which existed.

What was most serious was the daily diminu-

tion in the effective strength. On the 1st of January, 1793, in the eight armies of the Republic there was scarcely to be found 150,000 men present under arms. It is an essential feature of special corps of volunteers not to renew themselves; while at the same time the very existence of these troops completely stopped recruiting for the line. In addition to which, the patriots of 1791, being only engaged for one year, felt themselves free to return home, and 60,000 quitted the ranks. Men were immediately required, and on the 20th of February the Convention made a requisition for 300,000 National Guards. This contingent was assessed upon the departments by the executive power, upon the districts by the departmental administration, and on the parishes by the district directors. In default of a sufficient number of volunteers, the parishes took measures to furnish the complement, who were to be drawn from bachelors, and widowers without children, from eighteen to forty years of age. This measure did not produce the anticipated result; the

vague limit as to age and the uncontrolled powers left in the first place to the parishes, and afterwards conceded to the commissioned "représentants," gave rise to a host of abuses and betrayals of trust. On the one side the requisition became the means of persecuting those who were suspected of *aristocratie* or *moderantism*; on the other, all that was required was a certificate of civism, and the only care was to keep up the revolutionary army, even with the assistance, if necessary, of bounty money; Paris will long remember the "heroes of 500 livres." Finally the sum total of those who joined the armies on service was found to be considerably less than the anticipated number. Besides which, many were found to be so unfit for the profession of arms that, although they were not as yet subjected to very close inspection, it was found necessary to discard a great number. From a statement found in the portfolio of Saint Just, the force maintained on the 15th of July, 1793, amounted to 479,000 men. From this total must

be deducted, first the gendarmerie, then the dépôts, reserve battalions, &c. But more remains to be said: The army of the North, which showed on this statement 92,000 men, had then but 40,888 present under arms, and, fifteen days later, 33,338 only answered to the roll-call. The situation of our armies may be judged from this! Meanwhile the West was in arms, Lyons in insurrection, Toulon in the power of the English; all our frontiers were invaded, and, if the barrier of Vauban's fortresses had not retarded generals, happily for us, too methodical, possibly the evil would have been irreparable.

It was at this moment of supreme peril that Carnot became a member of the Committee of Public Safety. (August 14, 1793.) Six days later the general levy ("levée en masse") was voted by the National Convention—it differed essentially from the requisition; more severe in appearance, it was in reality less vexatious and less crushing. The law of the 20th February held every citizen from eighteen to forty years old (for a time even

from sixteen to forty-five) amenable to an arbitrary call, and subjected them to the whims of a representative, a mayor, or a police agent: that of the 20th August put an end to a capricious administration; taking only men from eighteen to twenty-five; but within this limit there was no exemption, and it was accepted by the good sense and patriotism of the nation. In six months all the apparatus of the Reign of Terror had failed to bring together the 300,000 soldiers called for in February, while, in three months, the "levée en masse" was completed, without having encountered any serious resistance. Let it no more be said that the guillotine saved France!* On

* The following is a biographical instance that puts in a tolerably good light the different systems of recruiting in the years 1792 and 1793. One of the bravest cavalry generals of the old imperial army has frequently recounted in my presence the early incidents of his career. Enlisting as a volunteer, in 1791, he returned home at the end of a year without being in any way troubled or questioned. Called out by the requisition, he did not rejoin; taken again by the "levée en masse," but disliking infantry service, he avoided the corps to which he was ordered, but entered a regiment of "Chasseurs à cheval," where he gained his first promotion at the point of the sword.

the 1st January, 1794, the general strength had remounted to 770,932 men: by deducting the armies of the West, of the coasts, of the interior, the dépôts, and the ineffective, we may estimate in round numbers that France at that period, attacked by 400,000 of the allies, brought into the field against them 500,000 combatants; an imposing total which we believe to be exact, although it may be inferior to the estimates of Cambon, and which, up to this day, has never been surpassed in any army exclusively composed of national troops.*

Arms and military stores were wanting as well as men, but here prodigies were performed: guided by science, and assisted on all sides, a new species of industry was improvised; France became a vast workshop, where cannon, muskets, and powder were manufactured. It was one of those efforts that cannot be often required of the

* In September, 1794, the muster-roll showed an effective of 1,169,000 men, but the total of men present did not go beyond 750,000 inclusive, which does not modify the average total of combatants in the field which we have given.

people, which they will not always grant, and which the foresight of government should spare them. There were, however, in the midst of the fever with which France was then seized, measures created worthy of surviving this generous movement, and of becoming permanent in our military establishment. While raising and arming the soldiers, it was necessary to organise them, for it was impossible to allow any longer the existence of distinctions of origin among the corps. Many generals had already tried to efface such, without being able to overcome resistance founded on acquired rights, or formal guarantees. The soldiers of the line cherished the traditions of their regiments; they held to their white uniforms, which they thought were more feared by the enemy, and the volunteers were jealous of their privileges. Each day difficulties and inconveniences were multiplied. The "levée en masse" was about to throw into the army five hundred and forty-three new battalions, of which the officers were chosen by election. A radical

measure became necessary, and Carnot knowing how to devise and execute it, was equal to the occasion. In the first place the staff of the "levée en masse" was disbanded; sergeants and officers relinquished stripes and epaulets, and mingled with their late subordinates. They were incorporated on an equal footing in the old battalions of volunteers. Then succeeded the "amalgam:" it was the word of the period. Effective National Guards of 1791 and 1792, soldiers of the requisition of 1793, former soldiers of the line, men of the north and south, citizens, or countrymen—all were blended together; the penal laws, discipline, pay, and conditions of service were equalised for all. No more rivalries of departments, no more traditions of the past; farewell to the old illustrious names—Picardy, Champagne, "Navarre sans peur," "Auvergne sans tache." But the numbers of the demi-brigades

* "Navarre sans peur," "Auvergne sans tache," were the mottoes and war-cries of these two regiments, one of which could trace its origin to the bands of infantry commanded by Bayard, "Le chevalier sans peur et sans reproche."

soon won their own halo of glory. Who would not have been proud to belong to the "invincible" 32nd, to the "terrible" 57th, to the "intrepid" 106th? and others even better, which I omit. The whole of the infantry assumed the blue coat, and were formed in demi-brigades of three battalions. There were in each a chef de brigade, three chefs de bataillons, and the staff of twenty-seven companies, three of which were grenadiers. It was almost the type of an infantry regiment of the present day. The cavalry preserved its old organisation, which it had never lost; reinforced in men and horses; it was good, and did great service, but did not receive a development proportional to that of the infantry. In our republican armies it was not employed in mass as it had been by Frederic, and as it was later by Napoleon.

The artillery of the line comprised seven regiments, to which must be added the flying artillery, formed in the early period of the revolution, and already become a just subject of pride in our

armies; besides which, a considerable number of gunners served the pieces attached to the infantry, which were in the proportion of two to each battalion, a disposition which had often a happy effect, and which Napoleon adopted and relinquished at various epochs, but which did not appear to have formed part of the regular organization. The military engineers were placed in command of their own troops; the sappers and miners united for the first time in one corps: it was left for an officer of engineers to realize thus the dream of Vauban.

In regard to the "special arms,"* the important and most difficult point was, with the ideas of the period, to maintain among the officers the scientific traditions which had long distinguished them. The establishments founded for this purpose by the monarchy had been overthrown or disfigured by the whirlwind of revolution, and it became necessary to reconstruct them on a new plan. To the

* "Armes spéciales" is the general name applied in the French army to the artillery and engineers.

great benefit of science, and of the public service, that which had been hitherto separate was united in a common bond. A system was established which was composed of a central preparatory school (shortly afterwards called the Polytechnic), the common nursery of all the learned bodies, civil and military, and of schools for the particular studies requisite for each profession. The students entered by competition into the first, receiving there theoretical instructions of a superior nature, quitting it as officers or engineers, and proceeding afterwards to acquire in the second the practical knowledge necessary to the exercise of their various professions.*

Prompted by Mange, his former tutor, Carnot, himself a mathematician of the first order, laid the foundation of that admirable system which exists up to the present day. He also tried to endow the service with an analogous institution, but exclusively military; here he failed. The Ecole de Mars existed but a few

* Decrees of September 28, 1794, and September 1, 1795.

months. The officers of the infantry and cavalry were supplied exclusively from the ranks; all that was done was to regulate the promotion. The absurd principle of "seniority of service" was abandoned, and a stop was put to the caprices of the commissioned representatives, who too often took advantage of urgent circumstances to place themselves beyond the jurisdiction of all law. A considerable share of promotion was still reserved to seniority of rank, and the principle of election was maintained only for a certain number of subaltern appointments. The greater number of superior officers were nominated by the executive power; neither the government nor the soldier electors could exercise their power of choice except within clearly defined limits. These measures had a salutary influence in the composition of the regimental executive; but the condition of the staff above all called for reform, a perilous task, for the prejudices and passions of the day had to be encountered. If too great facilities existed in

bringing some of the generals before the revolutionary tribunal, it was less easy to unseat those who most deserved dismissal. Carnot allowed many victims to be sacrificed. His having applied the epithet of "cowardly vociferator" to Robespierre dead, does not justify his having given a carte blanche to Robespierre living; and after having put his name to so many terrible decrees, the declaration that they were signed without being read cannot be accepted as exonerating him from all responsibility.* Still we must admit that Carnot did not instigate any sanguinary acts. He succeeded in deposing many who were unworthy, and in placing the higher military functions in the hands of men capable of making proper use of them.

Shortly after his advent to power, Jourdan was at the head of the army of the north, Hoche commanded that of the Moselle, Pichegru that of the Rhine, Kléber and Marceau were in La Vendée, Du Gommier and Buonaparte before

* Speech of the 9 Prairial, III. year.

Toulon. What was of equal importance to the selection of men, was that the duties were defined, and the desideratum vainly sought after by Louvois was at last found. To the "day's duty" succeeded the formation of "brigades" and "divisions," and the staff (adjutants-généraux, adjutants-commandants). Instead of receiving in their turn a sort of delegated chief command, and taking the temporary duties alternately, the generals employed on active service were given henceforth, while their duties were fixed and constant, a defined responsibility. With the exception of those who had some special service to perform (staff, engineers, or artillery), each one was in command of a certain body of men, always the same, whom he knew, and by whom he was known. Formerly the general-in-chief was obliged to delegate his powers, and to communicate his ideas to one of his lieutenants, who was changed every day. Now he had his chief of the staff at hand to transmit his orders, and his divisional officers to execute them. Free from

the cares of detail, he could better grasp the whole. He was no longer compelled by a direct impetus to move the mass of his army: he found his battalions united in demi-brigades, the latter in brigades, and the brigades in divisions. The first step of this admirably-proportioned ladder was the battalion, representing the unity of tactics, and the highest was the division, showing the unity of strategy.

We have thus seen the enrolment by bounty and arbitrary recruiting abolished, obligatory service imposed on all and accepted without resistance, the unity of the army re-established, and stamped with the national seal; the system of promotion regulated by law; scientific and military instruction assured to officers of each special arm, the duties of the generals marked out, the principles which should govern armies on service laid down and put in practice, and the Roman Legion resuscitated in the French division; such was the progress accomplished under Carnot's administration. All this was

not exclusively his own work; but he had the merit of carrying out everywhere that which had hitherto been tried with success only in certain points, and extending to all the benefits of an experience so quickly and dearly bought by some. In this immense work, begun in the midst of defeat, sketched out in one or two days, and completed in a few months, he was assisted by Robert Lindet, and by Prieur de la Côte d'Or, his old comrade of engineers. These three formed, in the midst of the redoubtable committee, the group of workers. Chief of this administrative triumvirate, Carnot exercised an incontestable superiority: himself become the actual minister of war (for the office itself had been suppressed), he could look upon his two colleagues as directors-general, to whom he confided certain prerogatives. He reserved exclusively to himself the conduct of military operations, which were expected to keep pace with the reorganisation of the army, and of which the success, however, depended on this

very reorganisation. He substituted harmony and method for the absence of plan and waste of labour. Convinced that the wish to be present everywhere resulted in universal weakness, he ordered the generals-in-chief to diminish their front of operations; indicated to them the point which he judged decisive, and ordered them to bear upon it with the mass of their force. Dunkirk was soon relieved by the battle of Hondschoote. Adding example to precept, Carnot hastened to Jourdan, took part in the victory of Wattignies, and raised the blockade of Maubeuge. Meanwhile, the army of the Rhine advanced with cries of "Landau or death," and by an heroic effort relieved this fortress, which had formerly belonged to France. After this triple onslaught a change was made in the distribution of the armies. We possessed five between the sea and the great river; they were reduced to three; on the left, the army of the North, on the right, that of Rhine and Moselle, under the same command, in the centre,

that of Sambre and Meuse, destined to play the principal part, formed from the former army of the Ardennes, and by divisions taken from the two wings: this disposition, conceived with sagacity and executed with boldness, astonished the enemy, foiled his plans, and the finishing stroke was given in the plains of Fleurus by a victory which saved France. The last days of the year 1794 saw our armies border the Rhine from Basle to Dusseldorf, penetrate into Holland, and crown the heights of the Pyrenees and Alps. On the 4th March, 1795, Carnot, speaking before the Convention, could recapitulate the results of an administration of eighteen months by a picture which equals the most eloquent peroration: "27 victories, of which 8 were pitched battles, 120 combats, 80,000 of the enemy killed, 91,000 prisoners, 116 fortresses or important towns taken, of which 36 were after a siege or blockade, 230 forts or redoubts carried, the capture of 3800 guns, 70,000 muskets, 1,900,000 pounds of powder,

and 90 colours." In descending from the tribune, Carnot left the Committee of Public Safety. A month later he became Chef de Bataillon by seniority; he had been a captain in the engineers and Chevalier of St. Louis before the revolution.

What he was not able to describe in this farewell oration, was the noble and manly bearing of this victorious army. By its example, and by the spirit which inspired its deeds, Carnot had in no small degree contributed to develop in all ranks, civic and military virtues. To borrow an expression from the phraseology of the epoch that has tainted so many things, but which did not always err, he had made courage, self-abnegation, and disinterestedness the order of the day. Of course I do not allude to the hordes whose excesses prolonged the civil war in the interior, and made the *chouannerie* succeed to the heroic Vendée. Kleber and Marceau, the true soldiers whom the chances of their career had rendered for a time witnesses of

these horrors, tore themselves, as soon as they could, away from this hideous spectacle, leaving the field open, alas! to the inventor of *infernal columns*, and to the other whom I will not name, who killed women after having violated them. On the contrary, to those who had repelled the invasion, humanity returned with other warlike virtues; the soldiers refused to perform the office of executioners, and constantly allowed the emigrants who fell into their hands to escape; the generals, in spite of the most terrible threats, no longer paid any attention to the orders of the Convention, who condemned to death the commandants of the garrisons left behind in some of our fortresses by the retreating allies. Moreau, in promulgating the decree forbidding quarter to be given to any Englishman or Hanoverian, added: "I have too good an opinion of French honour to believe that such an order can be executed," and it was not executed. It was the only case in which the law was allowed to be violated; for the armies

we have seen at the outset, valiant certainly, but impressionable, mistrustful, subject to panic, and often in revolt, became steady and subordinate. Discipline ceased to be irritating or offensive; it was firm, and on rare occasions, when repression was called for, severe. I was reading a short time ago the journal kept by an inhabitant of the Rhenish provinces, an account purely German and in no way French, and yet it showed the feeling of astonishment and admiration called forth by the conduct of the Republicans. These dreaded men were seen entering towns with their clothing in ribbons, often with wooden shoes on their feet, but preserving a soldier-like gait, halting in the open places in the midst of the trembling population, eating, close to their piled arms, the black bread brought with them, without quitting their ranks, waiting for the orders of their leaders. There were, it is true, exactions, but they were committed by the administration which followed the army, and were unworthy of it. It was

also the carelessness of the administration which sometimes led to marauding, but never pillage. During the severe winter from 1794 to 1795, which the army of the Rhine passed before Mayence, the soldiers, reduced to the last extremities, stole nothing but bread. At sowing time, they watched the peasants in the daylight, and at night opened the furrows with their bayonets, to feed upon the seed they dug up. According to those who had been through both campaigns, the sufferings were as great then as in 1812. A great number of men died of hunger and cold, but the survivors did not quit their colours: if, indeed, they wandered in search of food—and such food! often wild berries and poisonous roots—they returned at the sound of the first cannon-shot. The officers shared the hardship and privation of the men; all lived in the same frugal manner, and from choice or necessity, practised the same self-denial.

Doubtless, at that time, the uniform concealed rivalries, jealousies, and ambition, all passions

great or small; but self-abnegation was general, and imposed upon the most unwilling. A difficulty was often found in filling up vacant appointments. I knew a man who had received an education sufficiently good to qualify him to become head of an important office connected with the forests, sufficiently robust to go through seven years of this species of war, knapsack on back, musket on shoulder, and brave enough to merit a sword of honour, yet he never would accept promotion: commencing as a private he finished as one. He readily told the names of many of his comrades, who, like him, persisted in remaining in obscurity. Saint Cyr tells us that he only accepted the rank of general after having twice refused it, and then only under the threat of being placed under surveillance. This hesitation seems natural enough when, in the following page of the same memoirs, we read the account of the council to which the new general was summoned by the representatives; the first object which met his eye

being a guillotine, placed in front of the window! But we must again repeat, for the honour of human nature, that the fear of the scaffold never inspired one noble action. The bloody rule which weighed upon France came so quickly to its paroxysm, that if ever it had an object, that object was soon exceeded, and the number of victims was such, that every one expected to see his own turn arrive, and prepared for the sacrifice with an indifference which prolonged the duration of the scourge. Saint Cyr hastens to add, that the hideous apparatus exhibited by the representatives produced a contrary effect to that intended, and cooled the zeal of the most ardent. It was indeed from the source of the purest patriotism that our generals and our soldiers were inspired. Each one deemed it sufficient reward if the name of his division, or the number of his demi-brigade, was mentioned in the 'Moniteur.' "Barrère à la tribune!" was shouted at the moment of charging; for it was Barrère who used to read to the Convention the bulletins of our victories.

It is not to break the monotony of our narrative that we have tried to sketch the principal traits of this grand feature of the time,—the republican soldier. We have thought it requisite to show how the army, remodelled, reformed by sound laws, and by a good system of recruiting, while led by patriot chiefs, became purified and strengthened by war, instead of being weakened and corrupted by it.

We cannot consider military institutions as a simple arithmetical problem to solve; to pronounce upon them it is necessary to observe the moral influence which they exercise no less than their material results. With this view we must remember that the events of that period have given a complete refutation to those who accused the French of being unable to bear up against reverses. And this is an essential point; for no nation can hope that the fortune of war will be always favourable, nor that its troops will always be led by infallible generals.

If the repulses of 1795 were bravely borne,

it may also be said that the operations were of no great duration, and that the theatre of war on which they were concentrated was restricted. But in 1796 the ordeal was terrible: both starting from the left bank of the Rhine, Jourdan and Moreau had pushed on, the one to the confines of Bohemia, the other as far as the mountains of the Tyrol. The Danube and a wide extent of territory separated them; faults of execution aggravated the disadvantages of the eccentric direction of their movements; and the young opposing commander, the Archduke Charles, was too able a captain to let such an opportunity escape. Avoiding Moreau, he fell with all his force upon Jourdan, beating him at Amberg, at Wurzbourg, and driving him back to the Rhine. And now, after a long march to the front, culminating in two defeats, a still longer march to the rear, where each day had its combat; without rest, succour, or magazines, the army of Sambre and Meuse, which had left the environs of Dusseldorf with 71,000 soldiers,

showed on its return 60,000 under arms; the dead, wounded, and prisoners only were wanting. Exposed to the enemy by his comrade's misfortune, Moreau could not maintain his isolated and advanced position near Augsburg; he rendered his retreat illustrious by the victory of Biberach, and by the boldness with which he threw himself into the Val d'Enfer. But let us permit one of his lieutenants, who never indulges in the picturesque, and rarely gives himself up to enthusiasm, to describe to us in what state the army of the Rhine returned. "Six months of continued bivouacking had attenuated both men and horses; clothing as well as shoes were totally destroyed; one-third of the soldiers marched with bare feet, and no vestige of uniform could be seen upon them except their belts. Without the rags which covered them, their heads and shoulders would have been exposed to all the inclemency of the weather. It was in this state I saw them defile over the bridge of Huninguen, and yet, notwith-

standing, their appearance was imposing; at no period have I seen anything more martial." *

It was again Carnot who directed the campaign of 1796. Recalled to power as a member of the Directory, after some months of inaction, he gave himself up almost entirely to the conduct of military operations. He was the author of the plan which failed in the valley of the Danube, and which has been justly criticised. Nevertheless, at the same time this plan was crowned in Italy with the most dazzling success; if Jourdan vanquished was screened from blame by the orders of the Directory, the instructions sent from Paris had no share in the victories of Bonaparte. Here all was due to the general, and from the outset his far-seeing ambition had given to the army under his orders a peculiar stamp. Remember that proclamation which all the world know by heart, you will not find in it one word of country or of liberty. What does he promise to his troops? Glory

* Memoirs of Gouvion Saint Cyr.

and riches. A new horizon opened upon our soldiers—to our generals in particular; other customs succeeded to the rude and severe mode of life. When, in 1797, the future Duke of Castiglione, appointed to the command of the army of the Rhine, arrived at Strasbourg covered with embroidery from head to foot, and followed by his wife in a gilded coach, the simple lieutenants of Hoche and of Moreau, with difficulty distinguished from the crowd by the thin braid which bordered their coats, could scarcely believe their eyes.

By a contrast which is very apparent, while the taste for luxury spread in the army of Italy, purely revolutionary ideas seemed to acquire a greater intensity. Bonaparte wished his soldiers Jacobins, and encouraged the same railleries against austere republicanism which was professed in other quarters against the "Messieurs" of the army of the Rhine. At the approach of the 18 Fructidor he encouraged in the ranks the most lively demonstra-

tions against the "Constitutionalists;" and he accompanied the addresses to the troops by a significant letter: "Call upon the armies, and burn the presses," he wrote to the Directory. When Hoche, in spite of his advanced opinions, recoiled from the service demanded of him by the Parisian leaders, it was Bonaparte who sent the general to execute the *coup d'état*. His aspirations were realized; the blossoms of liberty were nipped in the bud, and the army replaced the mob as a revolutionary instrument. In a sort of mockery, Carnot, "le votant,"* the colleague of Saint Just, was proscribed, as having conspired for the re-establishment of royalty. He was, indeed, guilty, for he believed that a legal *régime* might be established in France, and that the sole mission of the army was to defend the country and its laws.

* "Les votants" were those who had voted the death of the king.

CHAPTER III.

EVEN before Napoleon attained to supreme power, when first he appeared upon the scene, he alone occupied it; his acts, proceedings, and opinions absorb the attention of all who, even from one point of view, have studied military history; and yet it is impossible to associate his name with any great changes in the French army. In regard to the special questions which now occupy us, in spite of wide discrepancies, we cannot separate the republican from the imperial periods: they are to a certain extent united in an indissoluble continuity. Moreover, none of the fundamental institutions of which the emperor in warfare made so grand and yet so fatal a use, belonged properly to him; he

borrowed them either from the monarchy or the revolution. He was certainly gifted with the creative power, and no man ever carried to a greater extent the art of endlessly varying administrative combinations. To repeat a quotation lately somewhat abused, no one was more capable than he to build up the nation with the strongest cement ("maçonner la nation à chaux et à sable"), but it is well known how little he realized the desire he expressed in this metaphor. The necessity of constantly improvising prevented his founding anything durable, and his prodigious talent in developing resources was only equalled by the frightful prodigality with which he exhausted them. In facility for creating armies, in rapidity for bringing them into the field, he is without a rival. In this regard, as in other respects, he is even superior to the five captains whom general opinion has placed at the head of all the great warriors of history.

It was with one and the same army that Alexander conquered all the countries comprised

between the Mediterranean and the Indus: with the army brought from Spain Hannibal gained his great victories, and maintained himself for eight years in Brutium: the legions organised in the Gallic wars enabled Cæsar to deprive Pompey and his lieutenants of the Roman empire. The troops led by Gustavus Adolphus, over all Germany, survived the Swedish hero; and if Frederic bore up against great reverses, he did so with the skeletons of the same regiments, incessantly recruited, which followed him from 1742 to 1763; but Napoleon, this Saturn of modern times, how many armies has he begotten and devoured! Let us follow him from Montenotte to Waterloo, and endeavour to reckon them up.

The army of Italy, when he took command of it, was, in spite of its destitution, firmly constituted and reinforced by troops which, in consequence of the peace with Spain, were not required in the Pyrenees: it was composed of soldiers first taught in the camps of instruction, and afterwards trained by several years of moun-

tain warfare; petty warfare perhaps, but an excellent school for the development of individual courage and intelligence, and for accustoming subordinate ranks to responsibility. The infantry was subdivided into four strong divisions, which had for some time been under command of experienced and energetic leaders; clever tacticians, young in years, but old in service. The cavalry division, small in number, but excellent, had just been placed under the orders of one of Dumouriez' companions, a man of German origin, who had escaped the revolutionary tribunal by a miracle, and who is described in one of the most glowing passages dictated at St. Helena, as the type of a light cavalry general. Bonaparte made no changes in this organisation; he did not interfere with it except for any special operations (such as the siege of Mantua and the invasion of the legations, or to replace generals killed in battle—La Harpe and Stengel). It was into these divisions that he drafted the contingents furnished by the army of the Alps,

or sent from the interior: it was with them that he achieved, in a few months, what seem the most rapid and complete operations ever recorded in the annals of war; with them he defeated Colli's Piedmontese, and the Austrians of Beaulieu, Wurmzer, Alvinzi, and the Archduke. It was only at the end that he was able to add to these divisions a fifth and superb one taken from the army of the Rhine, and selected by Moreau with a care which, under analogous circumstances, has found few imitators.

If the campaigns of 1796 and 1797 placed Bonaparte above all the captains of his time, the expedition to Egypt was about to show in him faculties of another order. On this occasion he himself chose his troops, regulated their number, selected the generals, superintended all the preparations, and combined all the means in his power, military, maritime, and administrative. Nothing more prompt or more perfect could be imagined. Still the formation of the expeditionary corps took the flower of our armies, and weakened

them all, that of Italy in particular, which was menaced by a terrible blow, for it was about to have on its hands both Austrians and Russians. Of the 36,000 chosen men who embarked at Toulon in the month of May, 1798, how many were destined never again to see the shores of France!

The General-in-Chief came back first and seized the power.

Free from all trammels, and surrounded by assemblies whose support he could count upon without having to dread their control, Bonaparte henceforth gave full scope to his genius for organisation: men, money, material,—the entire nation and its wealth were in his hands. He moulded and used both at his will. He found great confusion in the interior affairs of the nation, and a position abroad, difficult, indeed, but not seriously compromised. The great peril which threatened France had been avoided; the victory of Zurich had caused the plans of the coalition to miscarry; the Anglo-Russians had

just been beaten in Holland; Switzerland, which we occupied, stood out like a bastion between the two Austrian columns, one of which was closely pressing us before Huninguen, and the other blockading us in Genoa. The First Consul debouched by the flanks of this bastion in rear of the two hostile armies. To penetrate into Suabia, the army of the Rhine, always in excellent condition, was all that was wanted; it only required a leader and some reinforcement: this was provided for, and it was placed under the command of Moreau; but to make a descent upon Italy it became necessary to create a new army. This was Napoleon's first improvisation. Bringing to light resources, the existence of which was not even suspected, he concentrated and amassed them with infinite art, and without allowing his intention to be disclosed.

From liberated Holland, from pacified La Vendée, from garrisons no longer required, and from the dépôts of the army of Egypt, he collected veteran soldiers and the staffs of regiments. Him-

self an officer of artillery, he increased the efficiency of this arm by placing the trains in the hands of gunner drivers. To re-establish order in the military administration, he restored the Intendants of the old Monarchy under the name of "Inspecteurs aux revues" (reviewing inspectors), and by the formation of a waggon train he gave a military element to the transport service. These measures, and some others of minor importance, but no less useful, assured to him a partial increase of strength. He completed the work by calling out all the conscripts belonging to the class of the seventh republican year.

We must pause a moment to explain the meaning of these words "class" and "conscript," at that time new.

Fourteen months before the 18 Brumaire,* the Republican Chambers passed a law which, while giving a normal character to the measures taken in 1793 at the time of the vote for the "levée en masse," but applying in a less

* 19 Fructidor of the year VI., 5th September, 1798.

rigid manner the principles then set forth, devoted to the defence of the country all the youth of France, even while economising the treasury and the population. Every Frenchman, in case of national danger, was liable to military service. Except in this extreme case the land army was made up by voluntary enlistment, and by means of the "conscription," which comprised all citizens from the age of twenty to twenty-five, with the exception of some dispensations and exemptions afterwards determined on.* The "conscript defenders," according to the accepted expression, were divided into five "classes"—the first composed of all those who on the first day of the current year (1st Vendémiaire, 22nd September) had attained the age of twenty; the second of those who at the same period had completed their twenty-first year, and so on by an ascending scale. The legislative power fixed the number of the contingent, and the executive commenced

* 28 Nivose of the year VII., 19th January, 1799.

the levy by first calling out the youngest men. The succeeding classes were not to be resorted to until the first was exhausted. Whether called out or not, the conscript defenders were erased from the list five years after their inscription, and, except under extraordinary circumstances of war, then obtained their final release. When not on active service, they preserved all their political rights. Let us add that voluntary enrolment was required to be gratuitous, and that re-enlistment alone gave a right to high pay, and we can thus obtain a slight insight into what was called the law of the year VI., or of Jourdan (who was its originator), but which law was even better known by the name, at that time popular, but at a later period detested, of "the conscription." Its details were imperfect, and its arrangements incomplete, but in its ensemble the law was efficacious and just, as long as its practice was regulated by free and vigilant assemblies. The First Consul at once asked for and obtained from the legislative body,

not only a contingent, but the whole of the first class. He did not limit himself to this: in the enactment,* which, allowing for all casualties, called out for service more than 100,000 men, he inserted articles which greatly modified the organic law. The object of these changes, developed by a consular decree, was to limit the number of exemptions, and, above all, to put a stop to evasion ("l'insoumission"),† which had attained alarming proportions, paralysing recruiting, and troubling public order. Of these measures some were fiscal: heavy fines were inflicted upon those who were refractory; a contribution was imposed upon all who obtained a dispensation, and was levied upon property in possession or prospective. The other regulations, necessary, perhaps, under the circumstances, but in principle much to be regretted, placed all the population under surveillance, and

* Law of the 17th Ventôse the year VII. (March 7th, 1800).

† The act of one who does not present himself for conscription, or who does not join his regiment when drawn.

gave to general officers extraordinary powers, and some of the functions of a police. The most important measure was that authorising "substitution," which, although formerly tolerated in the formation of the militia, and sanctioned by the rules of the requisition, was prohibited by the law of the "levée en masse," and by that of the year VI. The privilege of presenting a "substitute" was accorded to those called out who "were incapable of bearing the hardships of war, or who were allowed to be of more use to the state, by the prosecution of their labours or their studies, than by joining the army." To the sous-préfets the task was delegated of pronouncing upon the fitness of the young men, and of deciding whether they should be allowed to find substitutes. Nothing could be more arbitrary or more favourable to trickery.

Whatever might be the absolute merit or moral value of those arrangements, they certainly gave to the conscription an efficiency which it had not possessed at its commencement. Certain

of leaving behind him well-furnished dépôts, the First Consul was enabled to set in motion the army of reserve, and, four months after the vote for the law of the year VIII., he had gained the battle of Marengo.

It is not our province to give the details of that glorious day, nor to show the admirable strategic combination, which was executed with such perfect precision. We bring to notice only that, if the courage displayed by the conquerors of Marengo renders them worthy of their country's gratitude, the details of the action will not allow this army to be considered equal in any respect to those which for many years had served the republic. It was slightly deficient in cohesive power. The number of young soldiers was far from exceeding a reasonable proportion; but many of the regiments were of recent organization, and they contained too many men accustomed to dépôt life: a lengthened garrison service does not enhance the value of the soldier.

The treaties of Luneville and Amiens as-

sured a glorious peace to France. By founding a fourth dynasty, the Emperor—for we may anticipate a little the Senatus Consultum of 1804 to give him this title—the Emperor wished to give a permanent stamp to the revolution of 1789. Sometimes with a little disguise, often quite openly, he adapted old monarchical usages to the new *régime*. The Legion of Honour was created, military honours reappeared: the marshal's baton once more became the badge of superior command, and gave our most celebrated generals undisputed authority over their less fortunate or less illustrious comrades. Purely honorary titles (colonel, general, &c.), court appointments, large emoluments, and grants in money, completed the system of which the germ was to be found in the proclamation of the young general of 1796. The numbers of the demi-brigades were changed and replaced by the old regimental names. An attempt was even made to restore the white uniform to the infantry; but Napoleon possessed too much tact

to persevere where experience showed that his efforts were futile or badly received, and the blue coat was retained. He took more serious measures to destroy the republican spirit which, in spite of the character of the *coup d'état*, was effaced less quickly in the army than in the nation. Those generals and officers suspected of attachment to the institutions overthrown on the 18th Brumaire were kept in inferior or obscure positions, or placed on half-pay. The drafts of troops to Saint Domingo and the colonies were the medium for keeping at a distance corps, fractions of corps, and military men of all ranks, who were tainted with the old vice and reputed dangerous. The "correspondence of Napoleon I." does not throw as much light as would have been expected upon the organization of these expeditions. The instructions given to the Minister of War regarding the formation of detachments are not as much alluded to as the simple embarkation orders of the Minister of Marine. This is one of those omissions to be

regretted in a publication so valuable to history, and in every way so instructive. We have had the opportunity, however, of consulting written authorities, and of collecting authentic information from those whom particular circumstances had placed in a position to understand in all its details this episode of the early Empire, or who themselves were among the rare survivors of these distant and sanguinary expeditions. No doubt is entertained by either witnesses of or actors in this sinister drama regarding the policy displayed in the selection of a considerable portion of the 40,000 or 45,000 men sent beyond the seas during the years 1801 and 1802.

To fill up vacancies and to replace discharged soldiers the conscription continued in force, but in a degree suited to an armed peace establishment. The law of the 28th Floreal of the year X. (May 17, 1802) for five years consigned to the same corps the conscripts of each arrondissement, divided into two por-

tions the 120,000 soldiers required from the two classes of the years IX. and X., and left in reserve half of this contingent. The conscripts voted by the municipalities to form the reserve were to be periodically called out and exercised by officers detached for this purpose. We may observe that this arrangement was not carried out: during a peace of three years and a half the army had only for reserve undrilled conscripts. Attention was no more paid to the regulation providing for recruiting by arrondissements. Finally, the law of the 8th Nivose of the year XII. (28th December, 1803) re-established the plan formerly adopted in the formation of the militia, that of "drawing by lot," which, in spite of its undoubted disadvantages, was far superior to the eccentric and variable plan of calling out, put in practice during the last five years. This change in the regulations happened just in time to facilitate new levies, the inevitable result of the rupture of the peace of Amiens. The classes of the years XI. and XII.

were ordered to furnish their contingent, and, by a sort of liquidation, Napoleon obtained some of the conscripts in arrear who belonged to the preceding classes. The effectives amounted to 450,000 men, of whom 300,000 were disposable for the coasts and the Rhine. These 300,000 made up an army which has never yet been equalled, the army of the camp at Boulogne. Owing to a happy combination of monarchical regulations and republican institutions, military instruction and administration had attained to a rare degree of perfection. The *personnel* was incomparable; as well able to manœuvre as the grenadiers of Frederick, and the soldiers mingled with enthusiasm for their glorious chief a remnant of the Promethean fire of Jemmapes and Fleurus. The youngest were already robust and well drilled; and the oldest, still in their prime, could number their years of service by their campaigns. The regimental officers and the general staff were worthy of commanding such soldiers. The Emperor had retained the

formation of brigades and divisions; and the divisions were united in *corps d'armée*. This last arrangement was not altogether a novel one: already our armies in Germany had been distributed in grand masses, which often were called wings and centres, and the First Consul had in this manner distributed the army of Marengo. What was new was the multiplication of the *corps d'armée*, and, above all, the creation of special corps of cavalry destined to act in mass. With such a leader as Napoleon, and lieutenants who bore the names of Davoust, Lannes, Soult, Ney, Augereau, Bernadotte, and Murat, this new system must have worked marvellously well and produced extraordinary effects on the field of battle.

As a last reserve the Emperor had his guard. Our kings had always troops attached to their person; the National Assemblies, the inheritors of sovereign power, imitated their example, and Napoleon continued it. The grenadiers who protected the national representation

so well during the day of the 18th Brumaire had formed the nucleus of the consular guard, and was the little battalion which had crossed the Alps in 1800, and, by its heroic conduct, had retarded the offensive demonstration of the Austrians on the plain of Marengo. To the grenadiers were joined the chasseurs à pied, the chasseurs à cheval, and 24 guns; the whole forming a body of 7000 men. Nevertheless, Napoleon was theoretically in no way an advocate for *corps d'élite*, and he looked upon this creation as "a sacrifice made to the majesty of his vast empire and to the interests of his old soldiers."* The Emperor was severe upon himself when he formed this judgment. The normal state of France becoming one of war, the existence of the Imperial Guard could challenge criticism as long as its proportions were restrained in due limits, and while it remained under the orders of a sovereign who was at the same time the best general in battle.

* Letter to Joseph of the 22nd April, 1808.

Such was the army which, by its exploits more than by its numbers, will always be "the grand army." Such it was at Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena, Aurstadt, Eylau, and at Friedland. Cruelly decimated by its victories, but organised with sufficient strength to preserve its characteristics, and to give their stamp to the recruits who were added to its ranks; such it was when going forth to be scattered and swallowed up in the gulf of the Peninsular War.

The grand army entered Spain to repair the first disaster which had befallen the Empire. A bitter experience had just been acquired. The conscripts drafted into regiments of the camp at Boulogne became formed soldiers in a few days, but the "Legions" consisting of conscripts placed under the command of officers and non-commissioned officers taken from all parts, were exposed to sad mischances. The exigencies of politics did not allow Napoleon to take into account the lesson received at Baylen. The march to Vienna in 1809 necessitated the same

improvisations which had been called for in the march on Madrid in 1808. Glance over the volumes recently published of the correspondence of Napoleon, you will find in each page the words "provisional division," "regiment on march," "provisional battalion," "legion of reserve." These numerous designations have a similar meaning; they signify a number of soldiers and officers unknown to each other, whose chacos bore different numbers; collections of men brought together for temporary purposes, but to which necessity soon gave a permanent character. One after the other the regiments were scattered between the mouths of the Cattaro and the Texel, between Hamburg and Tarente, between Cadiz and the Oder. New creations were necessary to disguise the loss of strength, and also, alas! the expenditure of men which resulted from this perpetual marching and countermarching. Fourth and fifth battalions were formed to avoid disclosing to what state the three first were reduced. In

order that the absence of so many regiments might not be remarked, fresh names were given to those which replaced them: Fusiliers, Flankers, Riflemen, Skirmishers, &c. The guard was enormously augmented. In 1806 Napoleon considered a *corps d'élite* of 7000 men a sacrifice; in 1812 he raised it to 47,000 men, and yet in the intervening years he had learnt the nature of the disputes which, in his absence, inevitably resulted from the contact of troops of the line with privileged corps. At Fuentes d'Onor, Massena, reinforced in the evening by a portion of the guard, naturally wished to make use of it; but the artillery could not advance, the cavalry could not charge, nor the waggons bring up cartridges without a special order from their own commandant, who was never to be found at the opportune moment; and the fortune of the day, which might have belonged to France, remained with the English army. In accordance with the system established by Napoleon, and with the cha-

racter which he had introduced into the army, he should have been ubiquitous. From the habit of speaking only of the Emperor's service, the service of the country was not always sufficiently thought of, and, when not under the dreaded eye of the master, things were occasionally taken easily. There was little inclination shown either to obey or to assist each other. The day was past when Moreau placed himself under the orders of Joubert, who was but a colonel, while his new lieutenant had commanded the army of the Rhine. And when in the court of the Tuileries in 1815, Napoleon raised the old cry of *Vive la Nation!* forgotten for sixteen years, the Federals alone responded. Around the Emperor, this anachronism was not understood.

Let us return to 1809. In the midst of increasing confusion, Napoleon was still himself. Thanks to his memory, his vigilance, and his rare versatility, no detail was forgotten. He could follow the smallest detachment from one

end of Europe to the other, but—he could not steal fire from heaven; he could not transmit to others his own genius and ardour, nor animate, with his breath alone, the clay of the conscription which he fashioned so incessantly. A simple Senatus Consultum now sufficed to bring this formidable engine into play; first one, then two classes were called out in advance; then two, and three in arrear, and men who had thrice found substitutes, were eventually obliged to join the ranks. When it came to the Emperor's knowledge that the elder son of any great family was, in spite of the facilities for promotion, kept at home by parental authority, to avoid the military schools, an officer's commission was sent him—a singular *lettre de cachet.* To obtain men, anything was allowable; even boys were called out and placed in "the velites" and "the pupilles." While the guard was augmented by regiments not less brave, but as young and inexperienced as the generality, it was necessary to break up Oudinot's celebrated

grenadiers—this non-privileged *corps d'élite*—and to disperse them among thirty-six 4th battalions which came from the dépôts with soldiers raised within a few months. In other battalions still less cared for, the epaulet of the "grenadiers" or "voltigeurs" (flank companies) was even bestowed on those conscripts who had most quickly learnt to handle their weapons.

Nevertheless, this army, thus hastily constituted, had already taken Ratisbonne, and marched down the Danube. One corps alone, that of the conqueror of Auerstadt and Eckmuhl, retained its original organisation. To give a unity and an impulse to the others, Massena and Lannes were on the spot, and Macdonald marched side by side with the brave and modest Eugène. The troops were proved at Essling, and conquered at Wagram; but Providence did not withhold its warnings from Napoleon. He himself owned that he could no longer attempt what he had risked with the soldiers of Austerlitz. Engagements were more obsti-

nately disputed, and generals were compelled to expose themselves greatly. When at this same battle of Wagram, Massena's corps changed front to the left to cover the repulse of Boudet's division, and when the army of Italy replaced it in the centre, the latter advanced in deep order of battalions, deployed one behind the other, "at distance of mass," in the same order which was destined to be afterwards so fatal to the corps d'Erlon on the 18th June, 1815. Long after, Marshal Macdonald explained the motives which induced him to adopt this disposition, since so criticised. He had observed alarming symptoms; the roll-call, frequently repeated, showed an increasing proportion of absentees, not explained by the losses caused by the enemy's fire. "What!" exclaimed an interlocutor, "do you mean to say that our soldiers were no longer brave?" The Marshal, after a moment's reflection, replied in his simple and honest manner: "Yes; they were as brave, but they were no longer *welded together*."

In the same way that the grand army was exhausted in Spain, the army of Wagram was destined to be buried beneath the snows of Russia. We only require to speak of this colossal expedition as far as relates to the character of its organisation. It was a crusade with more method and less faith. The military force of Europe followed the Emperor while execrating his power. The purely French troops who crossed the Niemen in 1812 were in better condition than at the commencement of the war in 1809. To make use of Macdonald's expression, they were more firmly "welded together;" but they were in a manner hampered by being mixed up with foreign troops. There were entire corps of Bavarians, Saxons, and Westphalians; there were foreign divisions in every French *corps d'armée*, and, in nearly every French division, there were battalions of different languages and nationalities—Badois, Spaniards, Dutch, Croats, Hanseatics, &c. While bowing to the impenetrable motives which prompt the

resolutions of genius, common sense demands what confidence could be inspired by such a motley assemblage; and it is astonishing to find as many as 60,000 malcontents incorporated in our ranks—men who seemed collected together only to bring with them an element of insubordination and dissolution. It is above all startling when, at the essential points, the two wings of this immense line of battle, already so incongruous, we find the Prussians on one side and the Austrians on the other. Infatuation could not go to the extent of believing that, in case of disaster, either would make any great efforts to protect the flanks of the French column. What happened is well known.

The brilliant illusions which dazzled the mind of Napoleon on his departure for Moscow seem to have given place to some after-thoughts which perhaps he would not admit even to himself. No doubt he did not foresee disaster, but he endeavoured to guard against the same accident which took place in his rear in 1809,

such as the landing of the English at Walcheren, and the attempts of Major Schill and the Duke of Brunswick. With this view he established a *corps d'armée* on the Oder, and left behind him instructions for calling out the 140,000 conscripts of 1813, of which a justly popular romance has given us the type. He also ordered the formation in "cohorts" of about 100,000 National Guards from the ages of twenty-two to twenty-seven, the residue of the oldest classes of the conscription; these men were arbitrarily brought together under the promise of being only employed for the defence of the country. After his sudden return from Smorgoni, Napoleon therefore found about 240,000 men under arms in France. A decree of the Senate sufficed to form the National Guard into regiments and to do away with the special conditions under which they were embodied. By recalling officers from Spain and taking from our ports the men no longer required for our phantom navy—by employing several ex-

pedients already in use at other periods, and of which the form alone was changed—Napoleon was enabled to bring together on the Elbe, in the month of April, 1813, not 265,000 men, as were shown in adding up his resources on paper, but 195,000 at the utmost. To such an extent had the loss, usual in the formation of armies, been increased by the peculiar elements of which this one was composed. When all the levies were united, the total of this armament in this fatal year amounted to 360,000 soldiers—a miracle of creative power! But the miracles of even the greatest men have a limit, and the people are taught by cruel lessons to measure the distance which separates men boasting to be sent by Providence from Providence itself.

In the month of November, 1813, 44,000 combatants, the *débris* of the disaster of Leipzig, halted before Mayence, and a few days later, they retired before the immense armies of the allies. Invasion, and how to repel it! The Emperor called out 550,000 men who ought to

have been taken from the thirteen classes of 1803 to 1815: it was a magnificent plan, although much more tyrannical than any decree of the Convention; but it was only a chimera. A few thousands of conscripts, to pour into the regiments that came from Spain, or to be commanded by invalided officers, this was all the nation could give. By the abuse which he had made of every military institution, Napoleon had broken their springs of action, and rendered them sterile; they were now but machines incapable of working or which had no material to work upon. The *corps d'armée* were but weak divisions; the necessary fortresses were neither repaired nor munitioned—not a ditch round Paris, not a fortification erected to help the movements of the army—nothing, or almost nothing, at Laon, Soissons, Langres, or Lyons; scarcely any muskets; and those to whom the few remaining arms were given did not know how to load them.

It was in the open field, with 60,000 or 70,000

heroes, harassed by fatigue, or scarcely arrived at manhood, that the Emperor, in 1814, stayed for three months, the march of the 300,000 picked soldiers with which Europe pressed on exhausted France.

When he returned from the isle of Elba in 1815, he found himself in command of a military power far more numerous, and far differently constituted.

The return of prisoners, and of remote garrisons, had brought back to our ranks many inured veterans; and, with the exception of the deplored change of cockade, and of the unfortunate formation of the "maison du roi," all the measures put in effect with regard to the army by the first restoration were worthy of eulogium. No disbanding, the old guard retained, the regiments of the line remodelled under new numbers, but reformed with care; those of the infantry to the number of 105, in three battalions; 56 regiments of cavalry, 15 of artillery; thus giving, counting the soldiers absent on furlough, an

effective of 230,000 good and well-officered soldiers.

By seeking out men who had quitted the service without a regular discharge; by demanding from the conscription a contingent; by making a call upon the National Guard, more in unison with the Supplementary Act, added to the Constitution (" l'acte additionnel "), than with the past conduct and present manner of the sovereign, Napoleon calculated on obtaining 800,000 combatants. However, notwithstanding his prodigious activity, his intellect, as inventive as profound, his imperious mode of proceeding, he was in three months only able to obtain an effective of 300,000 men. He brought together 124,000 of them to invade Belgium; superb troops, in excellent condition and well commanded.

It would be impossible to imagine a more accomplished chief of the staff than Marshal Soult. Who was better able to lead a large body of infantry than Gerard, Lobau, or Reille? What might not be expected of a cavalry com-

manded by Pajol, Kellermann, Excelmans, Milhaud? and, to animate all, "the bravest of the brave" (Ney) was with the Emperor.

But as M. Thiers has justly observed in that fine work which cannot be too much studied, the army was wanting in calmness and unity; the spirit of all the leaders did not respond to the ardour of the soldiers; generals and officers met for the first time, or found themselves again together, after having been long separated, no less by distance than by ideas and by habits contracted in different countries, and in very different wars. The conduct of each man during the recent events was severely judged, each one observed and mistrusted the other. This absence of harmony, this want of good feeling, was manifested on every occasion during these short operations, and gave a peculiar stamp to the campaign of 1815. We will not enter into the inexhaustible controversy which this gloomy episode of our history has evoked, and which fifty years of discussion does not seem to have

exhausted. We will give a *résumé* of it in a few words. Never did captain strike more truly at the weak point of his enemy's breastplate; never were chiefs or soldiers more valiant; never was disaster more complete. Napoleon's last army succumbed at Waterloo; with it were destroyed the military institutions of France. For the survivors of so many battles, for the glorious "brigands of the Loire," there remained but the task of giving an admirable example of patriotic resignation. They understood the necessity of sparing their country the evils which had always followed the disbanding of large bodies of troops, thus practising at the last hour the civic virtues which inspired the armies born of the revolution, and which the splendour, as well as the calamities, of the Empire had for a time thrown into the shade.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANCE was disarmed and compelled to accept the conditions imposed by the conqueror. Our military institutions were now not only shaken and distorted, but utterly destroyed. It was no longer a question of reform, it became necessary, under the most unfavourable circumstances, to undertake a completely new creation, a task even more difficult than that accomplished in Prussia from 1808 to 1813 by Stein and Sharnhorst. While, like the Prussians, we had to bear the humiliation of foreign occupation, and the burden of war taxes—while, like them, we were deeply imbued with a feeling of patriotism, in the French character this noble sentiment assumed many forms; it did not stifle

hostile passions nor efface differences of opinion; in some natures it showed itself, by the wish to destroy every vestige of what was then called the revolutionary spirit; while in a great number it displayed itself in hatred of the new government. Many of the constitutional party regarded with little favour the re-establishment of the permanent army; they looked upon it as an obstacle to the development of public liberty. Finally the mass of the nation entertained a deep antipathy for the conscription, at the same time manifesting a platonic regret for the legendary man who had rendered this conscription so fatal an abuse to the country.

The difficulties of this complex position were of a nature to discourage the boldest; they did not deter Gouvion Saint Cyr. Firm at all times, liberal under the Empire, and from this cause little regarded by Napoleon, who always judged severely the marshal's fierce temper, he could, without renouncing anything, profess constitutional opinions, at the same time recalling

with some pride memories of glory, and showing, without reserve, a lively sympathy with the veteran soldiers. The movement of 1792 had launched him into the military profession at an age when, generally, all thought of entering it is given up (at twenty-eight); and he at once distinguished himself by a rare mixture of steadiness and enthusiasm, and by his clear, imaginative, and well-balanced mind. He brought these same qualities to bear in the management of affairs. Accustomed to weigh the chances of battle dispassionately and resolutely, he looked at the obstacles which surrounded him with the same calm and courageous forethought which animated him on the field of battle, and he manœuvred on this new ground with the ability and method which formerly called forth the exclamation from the soldiers of the army of the Rhine, "Look at Saint Cyr going to play at chess with the Austrians!" Uniting a knowledge of modern communities to a wide experience, strengthened by meditation and study, he

prepared the law of 1818, "which might be said to be inspired by the genius of France as, if we may believe Vegacius, the institution of the Roman legion was, by a god."* With the sanction of the king he brought it before the Chambers. "A sight unequalled in the history of the world!" he exclaimed; "a national and free government discussing its power and military system in the presence of the armies of Europe still occupying its territory!"

The law of Saint Cyr was in effect a complete system; it determined the mode of recruiting, the effective strength of the army, the composition of the national reserve, and the rules for promotion. This method of legislating in a single act upon different subjects was not without its inconveniences. All the items could not be treated with the clearness and precision desirable, and these imperfections neutralized the efficacy of some of the arrangements; but under existing circumstances this law had the

* Speech of General Ricard, 1824.]

advantage of quickly coming to the pith of essential questions, now considered as settled, but at that period warmly contested, and of at once laying the foundation of a military organization which, be it remembered, had to be entirely reconstructed, and of finally passing in the *ensemble* measures which would never have been accepted in detail.

The first article showed a verbal artifice called for by public feeling and by the previous declarations of Louis XVIII. The word *conscription* was omitted; voluntary engagement appeared as the principal element of recruiting, and the "call" as a subsidiary measure. The effective in peace was fixed at 240,000 men, and was to be made up by annual levies, not to exceed 40,000. The contingent was drawn from the departments, arrondissements, and cantons, in proportion to the strength of their population, and formed by means of drawing lots among the young men of twenty, the minimum height being 1^{m} 57′. Exemptions and dispensations

were wisely defined and left to the discretion of a revisionary council, who gave to the State, and to those interested, sufficient guarantees. Engagements were obliged to be gratuitous, bounties were forbidden, and re-engagements alone gave a right to higher pay; substitution was authorized, without the intervention of the authorities, except to certify to the fitness of the substitute. The man thus replaced was held responsible for one year, in case of desertion. The length of service was six years, counting from the 1st of January of the year in which the enlistment took place; the period of discharge was fixed for the 31st of December, except in extraordinary circumstances of war. Those called out, or their substitutes, were all incorporated, but might be left at their homes to be brought on active service as they were required. In cases of more extreme necessity special laws were to be provided.

Such were the principal provisions contained in the three first clauses of the law of the 10th

March, 1818. We have thought fit to enumerate these in detail, for most of them still appear in the laws which provide for the recruiting of the army. Clause IV. instituted the "veterans," and brought together under this name discharged non-commissioned officers and soldiers; and while leaving them full liberty "to marry," "to form establishments," imposed a territorial service which was to last six years, but was not to be exacted except in time of war: even in this case a law was required to oblige them to march beyond the boundary of their military divisions. This institution, described in the terms we have just quoted, had an immediate object, which might be changed in the future. In the designs of several cabinets, hostility against France seemed to survive the fall of the Empire; a new collision might be at hand, and Saint Cyr was desirous of assuring to our young army the co-operation of 240,000 soldiers accustomed to war, whom the events of 1815 had sent back to civil life. He immediately

composed his reserve by going back to the class of 1807, and calculated on providing for it by replacing successively proved soldiers by men who in default of experience of war had at least all the military instruction which can be acquired in time of peace. This was most assuredly a profound idea and a clever project; but its wording was obscure, and the mode of execution was not traced with sufficient clearness for this great experiment to be fully carried out. What was "territorial service?" Were the veterans to be placed under military rules? Were they to be formed in separate corps? How were they to be officered? These questions and many others were not solved.* Deeply impressed as he was with the wisdom of the principle, was the Marshal himself quite certain as to its mode of application? Did he wish only to make allowances for deep prejudice and strong mis-

* The distribution of these veteran legions in cantonal companies; proposed by the minister but rejected by the Chambers, had, above all, an administrative character, and did not give a military constitution to the reserve.

trust, and to take into account the assurances given to soldiers of the army of the Loire at the time of their disbandment—assurances which Marshal Macdonald, in touching language, recalled to the Chamber of Peers? In any case the fundamental idea contained in the law remained enveloped in considerable obscurity.

Clause V. had reference to penal provisions, and Clause VI., devoted to promotion, laid down rules, the equity of which is now so universally acknowledged that it seems superfluous to recall them. Henceforth no one could be an officer if he had not passed a sufficient time in the ranks, or submitted to the test of the military schools, open only to competition; a third of the second lieutenancies was reserved for the non-commissioned officers of corps. For promotion to other ranks, a happily maintained balance gave to the executive power the means of rewarding good service or of facilitating the rise of merit, while at the same time admitting

the claims of seniority, and setting a limit to favouritism, if it were hopeless to exclude it absolutely.

The principle of levies found many opponents: one orator who had for fifteen years commanded a brave regiment formed "at sixty livres a man," did not think that anything better could be invented, and he found an echo among his auditors; but attacks upon this point were soon parried. M. Royer Collard claiming, in magnificent language, which our liberalism of to-day might envy, the right of the Chambers to fix the annual contingent, carried few with him. The opposition concentrated its efforts upon the Clauses IV. and VI.; this, it was said, was revolution incarnate in the army, the annihilation of the royal power, a permanent plan of conspiracy against the throne! However, the sincere support given by the king, M. de Richelieu, and other ministers, to the Marshal, assured success, and, in spite of the strong discontent which the proposal of the law caused

among the leaders of the allied armies, it was carried in almost the same terms proposed by Saint Cyr. A few days later the foreign troops recrossed the frontier, and the facility with which the first levies of the contingent was executed imposed silence upon critics. France liberated was restored her army, and the army had its charter.

To obtain this great result, Saint Cyr was obliged to make a sacrifice. According to his idea, privileges, no matter how disguised or lessened, were not to be revived in our constitutional army, but he found it necessary to temporise on this point. The old guard, which it would have been so desirable to retain, had ceased to exist; he did not think it possible to re-establish it: above all, he believed that a numerous *corps d'élite* would in time of war be productive of much confusion, slightly compensated for by some advantages, and that during a long peace its disadvantages alone would be manifest. All the incidents of the

revolution and of the wars of the Empire were engraved upon his observant mind, and he professed the same opinion upon the utility of privileged corps as that held by most French military men who have discussed this question in an independent spirit. But from the first attempts to reorganise the army, the allied sovereigns or their ministers, fancying they saw the dreaded spectre of our old phalanxes, entertaining, or feigning to entertain, lively apprehensions for the stability of the throne of Louis XVIII., wished to put an absolute veto upon the new legislation. From 1815, the period of his first ministry, the Marshal had to encounter these obstacles, and which the exigencies of the time did not permit him to ignore; he found it necessary, also, to induce the king to abandon the vast military household with which he had surrounded himself or allowed himself to be surrounded in 1814. Saint Cyr temporized reluctantly: he maintained four companies of the garde du corps, and created the garde royale.

It was composed of nearly 30,000 men, distributed among a regiment af artillery, two divisions of cavalry and two of infantry, of which a brigade was Swiss. They were magnificent troops, well officered, and would assuredly have furnished in war time an excellent *corps d'armée*, but they were unable to fulfil the political mission assigned to them: the devotion of the brave royal guard did not save the Bourbon throne, and the revolution of July was accomplished amidst cries of "Vive la Ligne!"

If the advocates of *corps d'élite* cannot fall back upon the authority of Saint Cyr, neither can those who would build a system of reserve upon a basis of stationary regiments, recruited in special localities, place him under their banner. The organization of the infantry in departmental legions furnished a simple and quick method of grouping the military elements scattered by the disbandment of 1815; it facilitated the reconstruction of the army. It was a temporary measure which the Marshal had no

wish to render permanent. When, after he went out of office, the regimental system was restored, he did not disguise his approbation. We need not dwell upon the injurious stagnation which an indefinite residence in garrisons would entail upon the corps of our army, nor upon the difficulties likely to be encountered in the execution of the various services imposed upon our troops. In its relation to the *personnel* this system was equally defective. Put in practice during four or five critical years, it left disagreeable traces behind. Those who a short time ago were in the service may recollect the petty and obstinate parochial jealousies which divided certain corps of officers, and the origin of which dated from the commencement of the short-lived legions. In the history of our army, the partisans of localized recruiting cannot show a single really favourable precedent. The members of the Supreme Council of War, who, during the restoration, prepared a project for dividing the kingdom into recruiting dis-

tricts, never allowed themselves to entertain a similar idea.*

The names borne by the regiments under the old monarchy did not necessitate the soldiers being taken from particular provinces, and the Republic only possessed a good army when all the departmental battalions were fused into national demi-brigades.

Let us call to mind that this generous and inscrutable French people cannot be brought under the absolute classifications which are so much the fashion of the day. The French race, an incomparable type of variety in unity, is the product of the fusion of many races. Herein lies the secret of its strength, and the explanation of many of its weaknesses. This fusion has not been made uniformly. On this point analysis will show a preponderance of an element in one place which elsewhere may be wanting. Climates are as different as is the forma-

* See the speech of the General D'Ambrugeac in the Chamber of Peers, during the sitting of the 30th of January, 1832.

tion of the soil. Hence it follows that physical or moral aptitudes are not everywhere the same; hence different species of courage. It is the amalgamation of these aptitudes, of these different kinds of courage in our various corps, which give to our army its maximum of efficiency. Besides this, the hardships of war are unequal; even on a day of victory one division may suffer considerable losses—a regiment may be annihilated. At Eylau all the officers of the Fourteenth Regiment of the Line were killed, and the Corps of Augerau was so reduced that the Emperor was obliged to disband it. Imagine the consequences of a similar calamity happening to a departmental regiment, or to a *corps d'armée* recruited from one district! But it will be answered, Look at Switzerland, Austria, Prussia! Switzerland is tied in the organization (otherwise so remarkable and so worthy of study) of its militia by its federal constitution. Under another form, the same may be said of Austria. As for Prussia, it is uncertain whether she would

not still further increase the power of her army by mingling, for instance, the robust inhabitants of Pomerania or Brandenburgh with the men raised in the manufacturing districts; she is, besides, placed in an exceptional position by the composition of her corps of officers, and by the species of military aptitude inherent in the German race. The French army also possesses a peculiar idiosyncrasy which ought to be preserved. Nothing which takes place abroad shows any necessity for changing an organization hallowed by the experience of both war and peace, and which is so well adapted to the national temperament.

The temporary adoption of the departmental system had meanwhile, as we have shown, one result: it had facilitated the classification of the numerous body which the catastrophe of 1815 had left unemployed. Severe measures and the irritations of "half-pay" were lessened. It was found possible to relieve many officers from a position which at first had been so harshly thrust

upon them. After the first violent reaction, with the exception of some whimsical proceedings and exceptions to be regretted, the government seemed generally disposed to be just in regard to the distribution of military appointments; but many embarrassments could not be obviated. The great number of promotions of 1809 and 1813; the return of emigrants; the batches of second lieutenants which filled the *Maison Rouge* of 1814, loaded the army lists with a very heavy weight. If we can trace back to this period some few of the most illustrious careers to which our army pays homage, we must also allow that creations so sudden, so numerous, and so impromptu, did not always turn out happily, and that they became a legacy of future trouble to subsequent administrators. The evil was felt even after the Revolution of July, and it was only at the end of twenty or twenty-five years that France was enabled to reap all the advantages of the rules which Saint Cyr, in the law of 1818 and in sub-

sequent decrees, had laid down for the promotion and formation of the corps of officers. First in the list of institutions of this kind which the French army owes to him comes the staff-corps and the college attached to it. Instead of being surrounded by aides-de-camp as brave as elegant, but nominated by favour or friendship, generals now found near them officers acquainted with special branches of information—men who had acquired a knowledge of military geography, who were initiated in the details of the different arms; efficient intermediums between the ruling powers and the troops. Thus one of the great wants of military organization was provided for. Saint Cyr himself, an active and vigilant administrator, introduced many improvements in the branches of the service which came under his jurisdiction. Amongst other important measures, he had to carry out a decree passed during the administration of the Duc de Feltre, which made the "military intendance" furnish the paymasterships of regiments and

the management of all branches of the administration, thus filling the offices of Reviewing Inspectors, Comptrollers, and Commissariat staff. Recruited from regimental officers, the Intendance has since that time fulfilled its multiplied functions with an efficacy which is an honour to the probity and intelligence of the corps. Perhaps, however, the problem of army administration is not even yet completely solved. Shall we suggest the possibility of reconciling the severity of an honest supervision with something of the boldness and fertility of resource which characterized the old commissariat?

In regard to the cavalry and to the particular arms of the service, they were placed on a footing conformable to the existent state of military science. The cavalry were categorically divided into three classes; the artillery into regiments of horse and foot. Let us at once call to mind that, towards the end of the Restoration, and under the enlightened ad-

ministration of General Valée, this latter arm received, besides improved *matériel*, a fresh organization: the pontoniers alone were kept separate, and each regiment of artillery became a centre of instruction and organization, furnishing, according to the requirements of the service, batteries of different classes. We are now far in advance of the *matériel* of 1829; but the motives which, in 1860, led to the re-establishment of the old separation of regiments of artillery have not been generally understood.

Let us go back to 1824, immediately after the Spanish campaign. The army formed under the system of the law of 1818 proved to be steady, active, disciplined, and brave. With the exception of the miscalculation which necessitated the intervention of M. Ouvrard, in spite of the vexation caused amongst some people by the astonishing success of this contractor,* everything

* I conversed lately with an officer who, knapsack on back, had gone through the campaign of 1823; and who, since then, had been on active service in Africa, Italy, and the Crimea. "Never," he said, "were we as well provided for as in Spain."

succeeded admirably. The formation, however, of the corps of veterans did not fulfil the expectations formed of it. Those of the class of 1816 were alone called out: all of them did not obey, and those who did respond to the call did not disguise their discontent. These two facts are explained by a general cause and by particular reasons. In the first place it is always a difficult matter to explain to a man who has to "serve out his time" (sert pour son sort)—I must be forgiven for making use of military slang—the difference which exists between a provisional leave and final discharge. As soon as the certificate of good conduct is placed in the tin case, and he turns his back upon the barracks, he considers his obligation ended. In 1823 this idea had become even more deeply rooted in the minds of the veterans who had then in their possession, not their furlough only, but their discharge. The war in Spain was not popular, nor was it considered very serious; the soldiers of 1816 were astonished at being called out for so

little, and, as the measure did not extend to the other classes, their disgust was increased. Placed upon the strength of the various regiments by a wide interpretation of the law of 1818, they were meanwhile retained at the dépôts out of respect to the letter of the said law. To the annoyance caused by their incorporation was added the quasi-humiliation of "not being allowed to go on service." This unfortunate experience was not conclusive, but was received as such. The government proposed to the Chambers to repeal the fourth clause of the law of 1818, and to increase the total of the annual contingent to 60,000 men, and the length of service to eight years. These two latter arrangements were fully called for by the necessity of replacing resources no longer to be counted upon in consequence of the suppression of the veteran corps and the falling away of the levies. Indeed, if the number of malcontents diminished daily, the increase of those exempted by physical imperfections had exceeded the calculations, and

could not fail to advance as recruiting claimed the generations conceived amidst the great hecatombs of the empire.

The new duration of service was similar to the old engagements;* combined with the contingent, it allowed the total of the army to amount to 400,000 men, which, fixed by Saint Cyr, and allowed by all authorities to be sufficient, served as the basis for the framework of regiments. In order to regulate the drain upon the population, and to confine the effective to the limits established by the Chambers, the Crown had the right of leaving temporarily an indefinite number of young soldiers in their homes.

Although Marshal Souchet, a very competent advocate, may have, in the Chamber of Peers, vaunted the success of the work of 1818, the institution of the veterans was strongly, but not argumentatively, defended by Saint Cyr: it was also vindicated, but not warmly, in

* Decrees of 1776, 1791, and law of 1792.

the Chamber of Deputies by the left. The importance of the reserve seemed greatly diminished as soon as it no longer included the soldiers who had served through the last great wars: and this time had arrived. This circumstance, on the contrary, obtained fresh partisans for Clause IV.; the veterans were much esteemeed by M. de la Bourdonnaye, since their ranks no longer contained "those who had not always fought under the stainless banner." The true heat of the debate was brought to bear upon the amendments. The right showed the greatest animosity to Clause VI. of the law of 1818, relative to promotion, which it declared to be opposed to the charter, and which was lukewarmly defended by the ministry by a plea in bar. The right of primogeniture became also mixed up with recruiting in the most singular manner. The theories of the speakers of the right, and the attitude of the government, gave a fine opening to the trenchant sentences of M. Casimir Perier and to the manly eloquence of General

Foy. The amendments were rejected, and the law was passed. It was enforced without difficulty until replaced by a new enactment in 1832.

The attitude of Europe, and the general feeling in France, forced the government of July to give serious attention to military affairs. The necessity was apparent of organising our forces with a due regard to the chances of a war which might become general, and to the progress of the constitutional education of the country. The first question to examine was that of recruiting. Since the latter end of 1830, the subject was in the hands of a commission, presided over by the conqueror of Fleurus, Jourdan, who was at the same time the originator of the first law of the conscription, the celebrated one of the year VI. The scheme prepared in this assembly, and remodelled by the Council of State, was laid on the table of the Chamber of Deputies by Marshal Soult, in the month of August of the following year. The law of 1818 was taken as a basis; all that was not germane to the matter was first

expunged, among other things the famous Clause VI., relative to promotion: the army, however, did not lose the guarantees so wisely and ably assured by Saint Cyr: they were preserved and developed under a new enactment, and completed by arrangements which prevented arbitrary degradations, and made rank a proprietary right. This legislation has given to France the body of officers which she now possesses; it is its highest eulogium. The idea of fixing, by an organic act, the relative peace or war effective was renounced, thus leaving to temporary measures the care of determining the number, necessarily as variable as the data which regulated it. The right of voting the annual contingent was left to the Chambers. A system of assessment, based not only on the total population, but on the number of youths aged twenty who were entered in the census—the definition of the conditions of nationality requisite for admission into the army—a few modifications in the councils of revision—restrictions as to the right of exemp-

tion—stricter conditions laid down in regard to substitutes, and the creation of regimental schools —such were the new propositions which were carried, either without difficulty, or giving rise only to the requisite discussions.

The knotty point of the question was the duration of service and the formation of the reserve. The subject was treated from every point of view; the most contradictory theories were advanced. A weak contingent and long service; a heavy contingent and short service; a fixed or variable reserve, formed from a single element or from several elements destined to work through the army ("serrer sur l'armée") as General Foy said, or separated with its individual staff; all these systems were brought forward under the form of amendments, and were the occasion of long and interesting debates, as free from the political rancour of the day as human nature will allow. The reader may find in the "Moniteur" the details of these various combinations, of which several have been repro-

duced in these latter days as novelties. Among the orators whose ideas were not accepted, the one who expressed his opinions with the greatest force, and brought to bear the most correct calculations, was General d'Ambrugeac, the mouthpiece, it may be said, in this case, of some of the highest authorities in the army. He asked for a fixed contingent of 60,000 men, all to be brought under the colours, retained for five years on service, then to be kept five years on the strength of their corps, but being allowed to remain during the latter period in their homes, for the purpose of forming a regimental reserve, and finally to receive their discharge at the end of ten years. This scheme, of which we have given the principal heads, inasmuch as it was the best digested, the most methodical, and practical of all those which owed their origin to a single individual, laboured under the disadvantage of aggravating the hardships of the lottery system, and of confining the army to too narrow a circle. It failed in elasticity, and it robbed the legisla-

tive power of one of its essential prerogatives. The government had in the first place proposed for the contingent five years of actual service and two of reserve. The discussion brought to light the demerits of this too absolute division. There is, in fact, between peace and war an intermediate state where, without wishing to have recourse to a call upon the reserve, always somewhat sensational even when effected by a simple decree, it may be desirable that the ranks of the army be not composed of very young soldiers. Besides which, it was necessary to bear in mind that in a purely military point of view the legal duration of service was nominal. The first year being almost entirely taken up by the lotteries and their revision; by the formation and the march of detachments; by the embodying and equipment of the men, and the commencement of their instruction; it is only after eighteen months of legal service that, under ordinary circumstances, the infantry soldier can "join his battalion," that is to say, commence his real

novitiate, and the soldier of any special branch of the service is kept back even longer. These considerations decided the commission of the Chamber of Deputies to propose, by the mouth of their leader, M. Passy, who united military experience to the science of the political economist, and to the views of a statesman, a modified system, which was supported by the ministry and adopted by the Assembly. The duration of service was fixed at seven years; every man called upon by law to form the annual contingent was to be embodied; the executive power had the right of fixing the average of those who, according to the order of their numbers, were to be left at home, or who, according to the order of their class, were to receive provisional leave. These two categories formed the reserve, which a royal ordinance could at all times call out, and which the minister of war had the right of bringing together and drilling.

It seems difficult to find organic arrangements which would be at the same time more elastic

and more efficacious—which would better mark the line between the prerogatives of the legislature and those of the executive power—which would raise military *esprit* and instruction to a more just standard without enforcing the necessity of "disciplining the country"—which would, in fact, place the youth of France more completely in the hands of the state, while at the same time allowing full latitude to retrench useless charges to the treasury and to the people. The authority of the legislative power is assured by the annual vote for the contingent and for providing funds for the war minister, and the executive power has a sufficient liberty of action in the privilege of transferring men from actual service to the reserve, and *vice versâ*, without encountering the embarrassments of a too decided classification. To fix the annual contingent the Chambers recognized no other limit than their own judgment, and the number of citizens who attained to the age of twenty without being physically incapacitated, a number which no human power

is capable of changing,* while the government, restrained only by the laws of finance and the constitutional responsibility under which it rested, disposed of seven entire contingents. It was thought, in 1832, that with this legislation, levies of 80,000 men and voluntary enlistments would be sufficient to give a war strength of 500,000 men, and experience has proved that this calculation was just.† It has since been

* A certain augmentation of this figure might, however, be obtained by the adoption of the system of breech-loading, which would allow the standard of height in the service to be lowered. "The departments where the standard is lowest," said General Lamarque, in 1832, "are those in which there are the fewest men rejected." And while upon this subject, may we not look forward to the day when the *show* height required in certain corps may be abandoned? For artillery there are manœuvres where strength is required, for the engineers exceptional duties; for heavy and medium cavalry the weight of men, as well as that of horses, augments the force of the shock; but the Military Train, the Hospital Corps, and Light Cavalry, especially, if it is to be augmented, how long will it be so trammelled that we must place upon our little horses men whose stature alone constitutes a crushing weight?

† The government of 1848, moderate in its acts but sometimes warm in its language, thought it necessary to make a certain outcry at the state of weakness in which it found the army; and yet, however, without disarranging the "cadres," without any

necessary to increase the levies to 100,000, and even to 140,000 men; the law of 1832 has rendered this possible; it gives the means of still further raising them until the utter exhaustion of what a woodman would call the "possibility" of the nation.*

If the soldiers left at, or sent home on provisional furlough were neither brought together nor drilled, this state of the reserve was not, as we have just seen, the result of a deficiency in the legislation; it was merely a question of cadres. Marshal Soult applied his great intellect and his power of application to the solution

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new law, by merely working the present institutions, and by the employment of the resources delegated to it by the monarchy of July, by means of an expenditure of money inevitable in such a case, it was enabled in three months to bring up the army from a peace to a war-footing; and to raise the effective strength to a total of 502,000 men: which would have given 340,000 combatants on the frontiers.

* Continental foresters call "possibility" of a forest (or large cover) the extreme limit to which felling may be carried without damaging the undergrowth of the copse and the general condition of the wood.

of this problem: he wished to compose the reserve exclusively of military men who had served. In order that they might receive in their regiments sufficient instruction, and be afterwards disposed of within a reasonable time, he wished the duration of service to be extended to eight years, and he calculated on taking the officers from the third battalions of our hundred regiments for the purpose of devoting them to the command of the reserve force. To this general plan he added some excellent measures against the abuse of the privilege of substitutes, measures which unhappily disappeared in the shipwreck of the proposed scheme. The failure of this plan does not reflect on the wisdom of the idea which inspired it. Without depriving the reserve of its real character, which is to form the complement of the army, its importance, and efficacy can, and ought to be, above all at the present time, augmented even while perhaps reducing the restrictions which, multiplied by the progressive increase of the calls for service,

are injurious to the development of public wealth, and which contribute to the painful stagnation of the population.* The following are the reasons which, after four years of debate and numerous changes, caused the propositions of the war minister to end in one of those silent miscarriages of which representative governments have the secret.

The Chambers found the advantages of the system insufficient to warrant an aggravation of the burden of recruiting and the overthrow of a law to which the country was habituated; the prolongation of the length of service was therefore rejected, and this destroyed the general economy of the plan; hence other arrangements lost their importance, and, besides, it was discovered that it would lead to considerable expense and serious practical difficulties. It would be necessary to

* In the remarkable article of M. A. Cochut upon "Le Problême de l'Armée," published in the "Révue des Deux Mondes" of February 1st, 1867. It throws a light particularly on this side of the question; which is also, in other respects, so completely and so cleverly treated by the author of this work.

remodel the regiments, to change their idiosyncrasies; and there is nothing which should be approached with greater prudence or resolution. We do not allude to ephemeral discontents which may be overcome by patriotic feeling; but we cannot afford to neglect financial economy; the regard due to position honourably, often gloriously, acquired; finally, and above all, the essential condition of a good service must be that the transition from a peace to a war footing can be made without necessitating the creation of new corps; but to hope that it can be effected without increasing the cadres is to dream of an Utopia of which experience points out the danger. To maintain during peace a disproportionate quantity of officers—to keep them stationary or to devote them incessantly to the instruction of men who are continually leaving them, is to lay the foundation of future difficulties. Inasmuch as illusions produced by deceptive effective strength are more fatal than actual weakness in the effective, so a prepon-

derance of officers disgusted or unused to command would be found more inefficient than a too limited number. In 1841 France possessed a good army; the reserve was imperfect, but it existed, it was attainable, and while still under discussion it was re-embodied. To guarantee in the future the rudiments of instruction, was it necessary, without relieving the country, to weaken our military establishment? It is absolutely the antithesis to that which was done by the Prussian government. During the four years which preceded the last campaign it fortified the army of the line at the expense of the landwehr.

The warlike organization of the most formidable of the Germanic powers was not then, any more than it is at this time an impenetrable mystery; all its details were known, often discussed in the Chambers, studied at Ham as at the Tuileries. We could cite an unedited memoir — unfortunately unfinished — the fruit of personal observation and deep study,

inspired, not by the love of conquest or the hatred of foreign nations, but by a patriotism as enthusiastic, as far-seeing, and by a feeling of great responsibility; the work of a searching mind, free from prejudice, a mind which would have experienced but little surprise at the battle of Sadowa. To insure the "defence of France," the object of this work, the author above all relied on the army given to us by the laws of Saint Cyr, and improved in 1832—an army brave, united, active, disinterested, sober, intelligent, and national; proved in wars which had exercised the happiest influence upon the composition of our staff and the officers generally, as well as on the temperament of our regiments. It was necessary, however, in case of a grand struggle, to give to our army entire liberty of action, and to assist it if necessary. For this extreme case France herself possessed an institution peculiar to her, and which recalled many glorious souvenirs, la Garde Nationale Mobile. The law of the 22nd March, 1831, provided for the

creation of the "detached corps of the National Guard." All citizens aged from twenty to thirty years could be called out on this service according to their age, and by a series of categories which included successively bachelors, widowers without children, married men without children, widowers with children, and married men with children. The detached corps were only called out in virtue of a law or of a royal ordinance converted into a law at the next session, and the length of service was fixed at one year. They were not specially retained within the frontier. Any man belonging to these corps had to be assimilated to the soldiers of the line as regards pay, forage, and discipline. The ranks of non-commissioned officers, ensigns, and lieutenants were given by election; all others were left to the selection of the king, who could nominate them either from military men on service, on half-pay, or from the National Guard. We can understand what facilities were afforded by this law for the regular forma-

tion of battalions of volunteers to insure the defence of our coasts and fortresses, to protect the flanks and rear of the army, and, finally, to support it under reverses if fortune should be faithless to us; but the digest of the articles was affected by the haste with which they had been compiled and voted under the pressure of urgent circumstances. We must also allow for a feeling shared by both Chambers. Several peers and deputies remembered the outbreak of the revolution; many had been spectators of the fall of the Empire; all wished to prevent a recurrence of the error which, in 1792, had placed in the front rank a medley of National Guards and soldiers, and they wished to steel the nation against the dangerous fascination of the policy of Napoleon. Hence a certain predisposition against placing "in the power of the government a second conscription;" hence a series of precautions which in the event of a pressing call would have raised obstacles to the formation of detached corps, or would have

led to their dissolution—perhaps at an inopportune moment. A better law might have been passed; but, such as it was, it distinctly laid down the obligation imposed upon citizens. Without undertaking to meet all contingencies, it regulated essential points, the formation of cadres, and discipline, with a praiseworthy firmness and a just confidence in the executive power.

We do not require to recal the several measures taken successively by the government of July to complete the provision for the defence of France. The number of our infantry regiments carried up to a figure which permits the fullest development of their war strength; the creation of the Chasseurs à pied, and the improvement in the arms and the fortifications raised around Paris, Lyons, and other points, which the invasion of 1814 found so cruelly unprotected. Foreign nations were not unobservant of the progress accomplished so unostentatiously. Duly appreciated out of France, our military institu-

tions filled a *rôle* which was not without grandeur, and by the respect which they inspired, contributed to avert from Europe the scourge of war. The opinions of 1813 and 1815 were still dormant in many foreign courts, but neither when our army so proudly assured the independence of Belgium, nor at the crisis of 1840 did those feelings, inimical to France, lead to any serious result. In 1831, Marshal Maison, then ambassador of King Louis Philippe, was talking with the heir of a great monarchy; the conversation, although very courteous, was, however, interspersed with political allusions. In quitting his interlocutor, the Prince said, in a semi-ironical tone, "Ah, Marshal! what shall we see in Europe in the next few years?" "What we have seen during the last few months, sir," bluntly replied the old soldier; "many bad intentions but no action."

CHAPTER V.

It only remains for us to indicate summarily the modifications carried out since 1848 in our military institutions. The republican period, being able only to sketch out projects, need not delay us. We have, however, arrived at more positive results since 1852.

The initiative taken by the head of the state has led to the introduction of great improvements in artillery *matériel*, of which the end is not yet come. When we shall have attained to the combination of light guns of a long range and great precision, with the use of pieces calculated to produce crushing effects, the importance of artillery, always increasing, will become still

more considerable, and the proportion of this arm of the service will doubtless be augmented. The infantry, that queen of battles, has been increased in the number of its battalions of Chasseurs à pied, regiments of Zouaves and Algerian tiralleurs. The delicate transformation in its armament seems to point to necessary changes in its ordonnance, and will necessitate new methods of transport to keep up the supply of ammunition.

The attention due to the subject of reserve forces will also bear strongly upon infantry organization. Individual instruction and cavalry remounts have been the objects of special care. Many writers of the present day depreciate the value of cavalry, and look upon it as doomed by rifled cannon and the needle-gun. The utmost they will accord it is but to play a secondary part. While allowing here that many changes are possible, we do not share this opinion. The war in America, which advocates of improvised armies quote too often in support of their

thesis (for the United States was not entirely without military institutions, and the struggle, colossal though it were, was a civil war, sustained on both sides by troops which, at the outset, had the same faults of organization)—the war in America shows some interesting examples of the new employment of large bodies of cavalry. The movements of Stuart, and, above all, of Sheridan, deserve to be studied. In this respect also the campaign in Germany has not been without its lesson. On the evening of Sadowa the attitude of the Austrian cavalry diminished the extent of the disaster; and in the encounter of regiments or brigades, where courage was equal, the weight of men and horses decided the success. We were, therefore, gratified on reading a recent decree, which, while augmenting cavalry regiments of reserve, reassured us as to the fate of our illustrious cuirassiers, more ill-used lately by the press than even on the battle-fields of Eylau or Borodino. In spite of the novelty of "considérants,"

which led to the creation of a troop on account of the existence of its officers, those who still believe in the *Furia francese* have applauded the result. It can scarcely be doubted that many questions of the first importance occupy at this moment the attention of the chiefs of our army, and that, without falling into the dogmatical errors into which Louvois allowed himself to be dragged, or which so often has made the Aulic Council of Vienna take a false line, they will know how to imitate the care with which the German nation prepared to bring into action all its military power. We cannot reflect without anxiety upon the means which must have been necessary to maintain and put in motion these immense armies, which seem a feature of the times. The study of the use of railways, and of all modes of communication; of roads parallel or perpendicular to our frontiers, should keep pace with a new arrangement of magazines, workshops, and dépôts, which would thus allow each part of France to furnish, and to transport

everywhere, its contingent in men, resources, and *matériel* of every description.

Three reforms of a peculiarly organic character have been accomplished under the present government. Clause VI. of the Law of 1831, relative to detached corps of the National Guard, has been abolished in a formal manner by the decree of the 11th of January, 1852;* and the dispositions of this last Act, which were not inspired by the spirit of former Legislatures, did not indicate any retrogressive movement. During sixteen years there has not existed in France any legal mode of convoking or of organizing the "Garde Nationale Mobile." Citizens who, during this period, satisfied the Recruiting Law, and who at the present time have passed the age of twenty, may consider themselves free from the obligations imposed

* The Law of the 13th of June, 1851, relative to the National Guard, said that a special law would be presented on the subject of detached corps, but it strictly maintained the 6th Clause of the Law of 1831, until the promulgation of a new measure on the matter.

upon them by the Law of 1831. A new combination is talked of, destined to supply this constitutional want. Doubtless it will be stamped in some sort with a retrospective character, for it professes to legislate as much for present as future wants. All the measures taken at the present time on the subject of recruiting, or of the reserve, cannot fully take effect under several years; and if we may always calculate, in case of danger, on the enthusiasm of the nation, experience has proved the utility of being able to direct this movement, and of being in a position to perfect its result.

The Imperial Guard was re-established in 1854, in its proportion, its organization, and even in the present day, in some of its details of costume, recalling the Royal Guard of Charles X. We have noticed the part played by the *corps d'élite* in the history of our war institutions; we need not recur to it.

An opinion had often been expressed that infantry required a reserve in action similar to

what the cavalry already possessed in the cuirassiers. If this want existed, which is not universally admitted, perhaps it might have been supplied in a manner less costly and more in accordance with the general character of our civil and military organization. Besides, by a singular coincidence, on the day of Magenta, which covered the division of grenadiers and its leaders with so much glory, it was not exactly as a reserve that these fine and steady troops were engaged. The Imperial Guard is worthy, on every point, of taking the right of the French army; and we are assured that nothing is neglected to crush out the spirit of privilege; but it is difficult to entirely exclude it; it is shown even in certain details, in the habits of the officers, and the obligations which are imposed upon them. Let us also call to mind that in a discussion so comprehensive as that of 1832, in which some of the first generals of the Republic, such as Moncey and Jourdan, took part in, or were present at, as well as many of Napoleon's most

illustrious lieutenants, Soult, Macdonald, Mortier, Oudinot, Molitor; the heroes of the final imperial struggles, Gerard, Maison, Lobau, Clauzel; and men who were recognized authorities in matters of organization, such as Matthieu Dumas, Ambrugeac, or Préval, not one voice was raised in favour of the re-establishment of a large *corps d'élite*—of an army within an army.

Finally, the Law of 26th April, 1855, gave exoneration instead of substitution, and put government in the place of the former insurance companies. We should briefly explain the origin of this transformation. In 1824 General Foy uttered one of those cries which, coming from a soldier's heart, and delivered with eloquence, remains stamped upon all minds: "The tax of blood!" This expression contains a just and striking image; and all who may have any voice in the destiny of our armies should repeat it daily; but, reduced to its mathematical value, it has led people to conclusions which we do not believe to be correct—to consider the raising of

men as an enforced contribution; to materialize a moral obligation; to consider the refractory as a debtor in arrears, and the deserter as a bankrupt. It was also said, "Why not pour into the coffers of the State the money absorbed to-day by the profits of an immoral commerce?" Here would be found a resource for the treasury which, at certain times, might be most precious, and more than this, would be a means of augmenting the welfare of our soldiers and increasing the number of re-enlistments. This double train of ideas gives birth to the system of exoneration, or rather this system is resuscitated, for it had several precedents which it is useless to recapitulate. Brought forward in several pamphlets, it was first found in an official form in a report laid upon the table of the National Assembly in 1849 by General Lamoricière. But the commission of which he was the mouthpiece, were aware that being brought face to face with the "tax of blood," exoneration could not be upheld; that the engagements, intended to re-

lieve the mass of the population, could not be monopolised for the benefit of those citizens who were in the easiest circumstances, and, that without violating those principles of equality, which for seventy years have formed the basis of all our constitutions, it would be necessary to establish a sort of capitation (as this word did not please "cotisation" was employed); to impose upon every Frenchman, aged twenty, the obligation, either of serving a few years or of paying a sum proportionate to his fortune or to that of his parents; and there was to be no exemption, except in the case of the indigent infirm. These ideas, which at the least were logical, did not seem practical; the discussion brought to light all their inconveniences, and in spite of the efforts of the general, who possessed as much talent and method in the Senate as upon the field of battle, the proposed plan, when put to a final vote, could not be carried.

At the time when the army, the fruit of the legislaton of 1832, and formed in the Africa

wars, was showing in the Crimea the most brilliant ensemble of warlike virtues, the legislature of 1855, going back to a part of the foregoing system, established exoneration without adding to it cotisation, and instituted the reserve fund and re-engagement bounties. We cannot but approve of all that has been done to improve the condition of our old soldiers, to facilitate the payment of pensions; but were there no other means of arriving at this object? From 1793 to 1855 all who took up the subject of recruiting have been unanimous in rejecting bounties; they thought, with General Foy, that "the unpresuming class of non-commissioned officers of the old *régime* was extinct in France," and that there were no hopes of reviving it by factitious means. Have the results obtained in the last twelve years disproved this? Substitutes were to exist no longer. At this moment more than 56,000 of our soldiers serve under this name, without including those who, figuring among the re-enlisted, entered the

army as substitutes; for it must not be forgotten that all partisans of exoneration, while reprobating substitutes, often unjustly, have always calculated, to insure the working of their system, upon the inducement of bounties, as a means of retaining in the ranks these very men so severely judged. The calls upon the nation were to be decreased. They have varied from 100,000 to 140,000 men; these are barely found to be sufficient.* Finally, and above all, in the only year when the arms of France were engaged in Europe, the number of the exonerated was 42,217 against 13,713 re-engaged.

* Again, it was urged, "the army will be *moralised*." We are among those who believe that, as the evil did not exist, no remedy was to be sought, and that the army did not require any moral reform. Among the general returns of the administration of military justice no trace is to be found of any amelioration resulting from the Law of 1855. The reports of the condemnations among the effective are even increased. In 1835 there was 1 in 80; in 1846 they went down to 1 in 123; in 1851 they mounted to 1 in 81; in 1855 they decreased to 1 in 168; and in 1865 they went up to 1 in 101. The actual year when the law of exoneration was passed is the one when this report went down the lowest.

We will not dwell upon a point of such gravity; besides we cannot add to the following lines of the 'Moniteur' of 12th December, 1866: "A day may arrive when the bounty fund may have plenty of money, and the country not enough of soldiers." It seems unreasonable to limit the right of exoneration by a second lottery; this would be "to withdraw security from families without giving them freedom."* As to wishing to revive the old system without giving up the new, it would be to preserve the inconveniences natural to each while sacrificing a portion of their advantages. Is it not time to go back to 1832 to consider military service as a duty and not as a tax—substitution as an indulgence and not a right? To delay too long to put an end to "an honest experience,"† although unfortunate cannot be without dan-

* Report presented to the legislative body by M. de Belleyme, 1855.

† Speech of the Government Commissioner in the discussion upon the contingent Law of 1861. Let us add, that the Law of 1855 has been repealed since the above was written.

ger, for we must not allow prejudices to become inveterate. "The custom of exonerations from military service by paying money is a custom which, once allowed, may be difficult to abolish."*

We have now arrived at the end of this long treatise; we have no conclusion to form—no project to ventilate; and we are ignorant of the one which is being prepared in the high places of the State. When the honour, the grandeur, and the integrity of France are in question, we are convinced that no one will think of an evanescent popularity, or a successful opposition. It would have been preferable if this species of revision of our war establishment had been accomplished at another time, after Solferino, for instance, rather than after Sadowa; but the question having been mooted, the problem must be worked out. If the reader shares our opinion, he will believe that France is not as destitute

* Preamble of a projected law brought forward in 1850 by General Hautpoul, Minister of War.

of military institutions as we have been led to suppose; what is principally needed is to restore or preserve their entirety, unity, efficacy, and, if we touch upon another point, to develop their manhood in a national sense, by placing them under the ægis of liberty. The lessons of the past need not be thrown away. The grand creation of Louvois would have only been a benefit to France, if the power of Louis XIV. had been placed under a curb. Carnot deserves praise for having roughly amalgamated the National Guards and soldiers in one single army; but the improvidence which would force a government to have recourse in the present day to a similar measure would be inexcusable. The Senate of 1813 cannot be blamed for having sent "cohortes" into Saxony, since it was in Saxony that the country then required to be defended; Napoleon, however, should have been prevented from going to Madrid or to Moscow.

Liberty doubles the power of military insti-

tutions; it regulates and moderates their use; it has nothing to fear from them so long as the people do not abdicate their rights; its guarantee is in the strength of opinion, not in the weakness of the military system.

THE END.

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