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FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT WOLSELEY,
K.P., P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.C.L., LL.D., O.M.

A PERSONAL APPRECIATION.

IN Lord Wolseley has passed away one who was really a great General, who, had he had the opportunity given him, would in all probability have shown himself a great and successful leader in regular warfare. For this he had all the necessary qualifications. He knew war, so far as the records of war called Military History could give the knowledge of it to him, and thereon he formed decided judgments. When any subject came before him for decision, he looked at it not merely from one, but from all points of view, with an open mind. His decisions were clear and definite, so that no one under him could doubt what he meant. He possessed also the power of imagination, so necessary to a soldier for estimating rightly the probable lines his enemy in the field might take; and the absence of this quality was, in his opinion, somewhat of a weakness in our Army. But his power, so needful to a leader, of judging the personal worth of individuals as soldiers was simply extraordinary. He seemed almost intuitively to hit off men of strong character, and to know how they could be employed in war to the best advantage. Redvers Buller was, I think, the first of these, and Herbert Stewart the last. Not one of these strong men ever broke from his control, but that on service they were all his loyal and devoted helpers is in itself a proof that the man who led them was a stronger man than they. Recognition

of good service rendered was a striking feature of his generous disposition. In a letter that lies before me, which he sent to me immediately after the failure of the Khartoum Expedition, are the words "the sun of my luck set when Stewart was wounded." Of the details of soldiering in the field he was a master, as shown by the publication in 1869, when 36 years of age, of that remarkable book, *The Soldier's Pocket Book*, written, be it borne in mind, during the state of stagnation of thought which existed in the Army before the Franco-German War.

This date may be taken as the commencement of Lord Wolseley's career as an assailant of the system in which tradition and ignorance combined to hold the British Army in fetters. It is only men who, like myself, were in 1870 called to positions involving close contact with all ranks of officers, from Generals to subalterns, that have the faintest idea of the determined opposition offered to progress in those days. And even then we looked, I think almost instinctively, to Lord Wolseley as a sort of unacknowledged leader and encourager of our efforts to get the British officer to move on mentally. Lord Wolseley was too powerful an advocate of reform to be either ignored or suppressed by the authorities; sound and thorough military education to meet military needs was a matter he had greatly at heart; and unpopularity was necessarily the result; an unpopularity augmented by his work in aiding the introduction of short service and strong reserves, and also of selection, measures, the wisdom of which no one would be foolish enough to dispute to-day.

In 1877, when residing at Farnborough, he took in hand a work on *Tactical Exercises* around Aldershot; but want of time prevented his going on with it. Between 1878 and 1884 he worked hard to improve the training at the Staff College, encountering stolid obstruction from the authorities in power. And always he was ready to take the chair at lectures at the Royal United Service Institution, speaking in the discussions with delightful frankness.

But what endeared him so much to those of us who really knew him was his personal character. He was straight as a die, incapable of double dealing, meanness, back-stair work, or crabbing others, scornful of criticism on himself, and impenetrable to private or family influence. And his modesty in expressing himself on matters that he did not really know was a noticeable feature in his character, though this statement may surprise those who knew him only superficially.

And now I cannot refrain from narrating one incident in his life, known to few, I imagine, besides myself, and which shows the man.

In 1895 the Duke of Cambridge ceased to be the Commander-in-Chief. Lord Wolseley was then regarded as our

"only General," and the only possible successor to the Duke. It so happened that at the time Lord Wolseley was out of England, yachting in the North. And suddenly, at the end of June, rumour arose that it was not Lord Wolseley who would become Commander-in-Chief. Telegrams urging his immediate return were speedily sent by friends to Norway and the north of Scotland. He came back just about the time that the Campbell-Bannerman Government was ousted from office. And on July 17th in a letter to a friend he wrote :—

"I now know as a positive fact that if the late Government had not been turned out it *was settled* and would have been soon announced by Campbell-Bannerman, that Buller was to succeed H.R.H. on October 1st next. . . . Campbell-Bannerman was always such a friend of mine, that his change from me to Buller took me "aback" in a way I had never experienced before. What Lansdowne and the new people may decide I know not. It would not be dignified for me to ask for the place. . . . I went straight off to Homburg, where Lady Wolseley was, and on my return rushed through London here (Dublin). . . . I am glad not to be in London at this moment, as I know that ill-natured people would accuse me of intrigues and cabals, and of influencing the press, if the newspapers said anything in my favour at the last crisis of my career. But my hands are tied, and I can only look to my friends for help. . . . This sudden knockdown blow has been delivered to me *below the belt*."

Eventually Lord Wolseley was given the office, an office in which his own power was advisedly greatly narrowed, and of which the income was £1,000 a year less than he had received as Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. But here, again, he encountered great difficulties, and it was with gladness that he, at the end of his tenure of office, bid good-bye to the War Office, and, as he writes, ceased to be "the nominal Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Land Forces."

But those now in authority at the War Office have taken a just estimate of the services rendered by Lord Wolseley to his country, and they determined that in the selection of the place for the interment of his body and in the arrangements of the funeral, they would pay to his memory the highest tribute in their power; and this determination has given the deepest satisfaction to the British Army.

LONSDALE HALE.