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STRATEGY AND ITS TEACHING.

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Wednesday, June 8th, 1898.

Major-General J. F. MAURICE, C.B., in the Chair.

I.

THE phrase "War on the Map" may not be the best definition of strategy, but it has two advantages—it is short and it is comprehensive. It includes even more than the various processes which follow mobilisation, viz., the determination of objectives, the choice of a line of operations, the deployment of the army, the marches to the battle-field, the reaping of the fruits of victory, or escape from the consequences of defeat. Strategy does not await the declaration of war to spring into being. In a well-regulated State it is seldom inactive. It cannot be disassociated from statesmanship without prejudice to the national welfare, for it is concerned as much with preparation for war as with war itself, and in every question of foreign, and in many of home, policy, it calls for attention and consideration. It is, in fact, a branch of government, and the nation which ignores it, which puts it out of sight until war is imminent, and which refuses to accede to its demands in time of peace, invariably pays dear for its short-sightedness. If

"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned,"

human affairs have no nemesis so terrible as neglected strategy. We have before our eyes at this present moment a case in point. If the United States, while they had still time, had provided the means of following up a naval success, the Philippines might have been captured within a month of Admiral Dewey's brilliant victory, and the moral effect of such swift and vigorous strategy have been felt in every quarter of the globe. But the government was unprepared. It relied upon its fleet, forgetting that the scope of the sea-power is limited, and its action slow, that a navy is like the artillery of an army, preparing and supporting the attack, but unable of itself to bring matters to a decisive issue. Now, like ourselves in like case, after the bombardment of Alexandria, the nation is paying the penalty. Because its army was unready, deficient in numbers, in equipment, and in organi-

sation ; because transport was wanting, the enemy has received a gratuity of much time and much encouragement.

But readiness for war has a wider meaning in States less isolated than the United States. It involves more than the provision of adequate numbers, the training of the troops, the system of mobilisation, the accumulation and the distribution of munitions and equipment. It involves more than the collection of information and the preparation of plans of campaign. *Le secret de guerre*, said Napoleon, *est dans le secret des communications* ; and it is with communications that the strategy of peace has mainly to do. Not only have all possible theatres of war—provinces on the frontier, and countries beyond the frontier—to be studied and surveyed, but these theatres must be prepared. All lines of communication, roads, railways, waterways, have a military as well as a commercial interest, and, if the demands of strategy are complied with, some must be constructed in which the commercial interest is only secondary. There may be railways or canals which bring in no present profit, but which are essential to the security, and so to the prosperity, of an empire. Harbours without trade, coaling-stations which no merchant-steamer visits may be possessions more valuable than the most fertile *hinterland*. Again, the strategy of peace has to do with fortresses, arsenals, entrenched camps, and *lêtes de pont*. It is true that like Torres Vedras, Petersburg, and Plevna, these can often be improvised after hostilities have begun, and the fact that their appearance comes as a surprise may enhance their value. But their efficiency must depend on the local conditions, on the supply of labour, on finance, on prestige, on the number of troops available for garrisons ; and the strategy of fortification is so complicated that it is unwise in the extreme to postpone the consideration of these questions until war is an accomplished fact.

Lastly, the strategy of peace has to do with prestige. Of weight even in Europe, in Asia, where the conflict of interests is so fierce, and where governments are so unstable that the great game of politics is watched and discussed in every village bazaar, where a rebuff to one of the rival Powers is felt from the Dardanelles to the Yellow Sea, where self-interest reigns supreme, and loyalty, patriotism, and gratitude are almost unknown words, prestige is a most potent force.

Vast indeed, where great empires are concerned, is the scope of strategy, and terrible the responsibility of those who refuse to accept the sacrifices and pay the price which it demands. Each decade of history has its warning. Nation after nation has fallen prostrate and exhausted, bankrupt in all but honour, for the sole reason that its rulers, while providing men, armament, and equipment, neglected to prepare the ground which those men have been called upon to defend. The latest campaigns on the Continent furnish conspicuous examples. It is a general impression that von Moltke's successes in '66 and '70 were due mainly to superior numbers, training, and organisation ; but it is to be noted that the unreadiness of both Austria and France was not confined to the condition of their armies. Both, during peace, had overlooked the importance of communications. It may be true

that the German railways had not been constructed with a primary view to strategical requirements; but the fact remains that the system was far better adapted to the rapid assembly, concentration, and supply of the field armies than either the Austrian or the French. Thus at the very outset of operations, the short-sightedness of his adversaries made von Moltke a present, so to speak, of several days, and those days, skilfully utilised, practically made success a certainty.

If we turn to the question of Imperial Defence, and consider how far the lesson has been taken to heart by ourselves, I do not think that we shall find much cause for dissatisfaction. The long chain of coaling stations and naval arsenals, making good the hold of our amphibious power on our most distant provinces, is a splendid monument to the wisdom and foresight of English statesmen. Nor have our land communications been overlooked. The Canadian-Pacific Railway owes much to the encouragement received from the mother-country, and the line to Uganda, which may prove in the time to come a more important artery of defence than of trade, is an Imperial enterprise of hardly less magnitude than the occupation of the Suez Canal.

It might be argued, however, that attention has been too exclusively directed to the needs of the Sea-Power. Our great lines of communication enable us to carry out reserves with speed and safety to any part of the Empire that may be threatened, but they do not provide for the assembly and concentration of the troops upon our land frontiers. They bring them, in fact, to the immediate base of operations, but they do not assist them in their advance to the scene of action. It is to be remembered, however, that with regard to our land frontiers, whether they bound our own territories, the territories of allies whom we are pledged to protect, or territories within our "spheres of influence," the conditions of the defensive problem have undergone within the last few years a most radical change. Until a comparatively recent date the danger of these frontiers being crossed by other than a savage foe was most remote, and our policy, in such circumstances, has been to leave the establishment of communications, and the preparation of the theatre of war, to the colonies or dependencies concerned. Up to the present the system has not worked badly. No province of the Empire has sunk under the burden imposed upon it; nowhere have our frontiers been contracted. But to-day the system is inapplicable. Our land frontiers, as I have already defined them, are overshadowed by the advance of formidable rivals, and the preparations for their defence can no longer remain a local question. The means of concentrating, supplying, and supporting our troops upon the border are as much an Imperial concern as the establishment of coaling-stations or the construction of the Uganda railway. The defence of our land frontiers has become a matter of the same magnitude as the maintenance of our supremacy at sea; it must be treated, strategically, tactically, and financially, from the same Imperial standpoint; and where the local resources are insufficient they should be supplemented from the Imperial purse.

It is in India, I need hardly say, that such a change of policy is

especially imperative. To redeem our pledges, to uphold our prestige, to preserve the provinces of Afghanistan from aggression, the first thing wanting, and the second thing, and the third thing, is an adequate system of communication; a system providing not merely for the passive defence of a river or a mountain range, but for that counter-stroke which both the strategical situation and the maintenance of our prestige make of such paramount necessity. There are those amongst us, I have little doubt, who hold the opinion that our resources would be more usefully employed in strengthening our vulnerable points than in tapping new markets; who are aware that it is difficult to defend a frontier if there are no roads by which you can bring your troops up to it; who would prefer to see railroads laid in Beluchistan rather than in East Africa, and who believe that it is more important to bring India closer to Persia and Herat than even to dominate the sources of the Nile. Yet those who have studied the question of our Imperial communications cannot have failed to realise the enormous difficulties, financial and otherwise, that it continually presents; the difficulty of reconciling strategical and commercial interests, the difficulty of avoiding the resentment and irritation of other Powers, and perhaps the greatest of all, the difficulty of convincing the British electorate that an investment which gives no immediate return may still be profitable. Once appreciate the difficulties, and admiration for the wise and resolute statesmanship of successive Cabinets is the only feeling that remains. Russia is the one Power that has displayed the same vigour and consistency, and her great strategic railways, the Trans-Caucasian and the Trans-Siberian, are achievements which even surpass our own. But the difficulties of Russia, where no public opinion has to be conciliated, and where no vulnerable points exist, are far fewer, except as concerns finance, than those of England. Russia, however, has made enormous sacrifices in her attempt to secure commanding strategical positions, and it is not impossible that she has reached the limits of her endeavours. England, on the other hand, has drawn but few drafts on her Imperial treasury, and by the aid of that treasury, skilfully applied, the advantages secured by her greater rival may yet be neutralised. Communications, bases, and supply depôts, generally cut two ways: they facilitate attack, but they offer objectives for counter-attack; in fact, if the initiative be lost, they become embarrassments and encumbrances.

I do not think that I need apologise for introducing a lecture on practical strategy with these reflections on high politics. It is difficult, if not impossible, to divorce soldiering and statesmanship. The soldier must often be the adviser of the statesman. He is the immediate guardian of our prestige. He alone is familiar with our distant borders. Communications, fortresses, arsenals, the preparation of the theatres of war, are his especial concern; and with an Army so small and so scattered as our own, protecting so vast an extent of territory, it is inevitable that this work should fall into many hands, some of them of no high rank. Semi-independent commands are numerous throughout the Empire, and so great are their responsibilities, so far removed are they from the supreme control, that in each one of them the functions of the staff, however small the

personnel, are as onerous and important as at head-quarters. Intelligence, mobilisation, topographical, and what I may call strategical, duties, *i.e.*, the planning of campaigns and the preparation of theatres of war, have all to be discharged, and the neglect of any one of them, in any quarter whatsoever, may, as we discovered in South Africa, mean disaster, and even disgrace. If our marches are to be adequately protected, it is above all things important that the wardens should be competent to counsel and to warn; and a knowledge of Imperial strategy is thus as essential to every general and staff officer employed in our outlying provinces as vigilance, foresight, and hard thinking.

II.

But when the work of preparation is finished, when the conflict is inevitable, and statesmanship can do no more, strategy still controls events; and so long as armed forces still hold the field, it is the most powerful factor on the theatre of war. Perhaps this is not always realised. War is too often regarded as a series of battles and sieges; success as the result of higher courage and better training; and the tactician, leading his troops to victory, is a more popular personage than the strategist, poring over his map, and leaving to others the perils and the glory of the fight. Yet it is the marches and manœuvres, the study of the map, the plans thought out perhaps months before the campaign begins, that give the tactician his opportunity. The ablest commanders are often robbed of half their laurels by the critics, and the more skilful the strategy and the tactics the less the praise that is awarded them. The ordinary conception of brilliant leading is the defeat of a large force by a small; not, as it should be, the concentration of superior strength upon the battlefield, and the direction of the attack in such a manner as to make victory both certain and decisive. We hear generals belittled because their victories have been cheaply won. Unless they can show a large "butcher's bill" it is assumed that the enemy must either have been cowardly or inefficient; and the skill which brought the army to the right place at the right time, which settled the time and the direction of the attack—the psychological moment and the most vulnerable point—and which struck so hard at the enemy's *moral* that his heart turned to water when the first shot was fired, is forgotten or overlooked.

If the far-reaching effect of strategy is not always appreciated in England it is probably because in many of our campaigns it plays so small a part. With our invariable superiority of moral strength it is usually unnecessary to trouble about outwitting and outmanœuvring our savage foes. The first object is to get at them by the route most favourable for supply and movement, and to trust to good tactics and hard fighting to do the rest. Moreover, it is difficult to bring strategy into play against enemies who have no vulnerable or vital points, no lines of communication, no capitals, no fortresses, and no bases of operations, and who move with the rapidity of cavalry. Our every-day experience, however, is not without its dangers. Even against savages able strategy, if the theatre of war permits it, may render a tactical success both more decisive and less costly. If the tribesmen can be surprised; if they can be forced to fight on ground they have not prepared; if their retreat be cut off; or if

detached forces, operating in different directions, cause them to disperse their levies, a saving in time, life, and money may result. The Ashantee campaign of 1872, the Chitral campaign of 1895, and Sir Herbert Kitchener's operations on the Nile are cases in point.

Again, the neglect of strategy in one campaign may lead to its neglect in others, perhaps far more serious. The campaigns of Algeria and Mexico, for example, appear to have exercised an evil influence on the French leading. In such irregular fighting there was no need, and possibly no opportunity, of applying the grand principles of generalship, just as there was no need for extended reconnaissance. So the habit was lost; and the disasters of 1870 show what may happen if the experience of savage warfare is held to be a sufficient guide for operations against more formidable foes.

If the writings of the greatest soldiers be examined it will be found that they each and all of them lay even greater stress on the way in which the troops are brought up to the battle-field than on the way in which they are handled afterwards. For one word on tactics the Wellington Despatches contain a hundred on strategy; and, if we may credit Napoleon, the army has much less to do with the issue of the campaign than has the general who directs it. Over and over again he insists upon the predominant influence of the controlling will; and every page of his Correspondence, as every incident of his practice, reveals the vast importance he attributed to "war upon the map." It was on the map rather than on the ground that his most brilliant victories were won. On the battle-field he had only to manœuvre the superior numbers which his skill had concentrated against a bewildered and half-beaten enemy. There is no need, however, to go to Napoleon to learn the importance of strategy. Our own history supplies us with many striking illustrations. If in the campaigns of the American Revolution the generalship displayed was contemptible, in the great wars with France the leading of our admirals could hardly have been bettered. On her own element England showed a vigour, a wisdom, and an insight which not only found their climax in Rodney, Nelson, and St. Vincent, but which seemed to pervade the whole service. Nor had many years to pass before the errors of the courtier generals in America were more than redeemed by a professional soldier. The Peninsula proved that the fighting brains of England were not monopolised by the Navy, and the defence of Portugal, the construction of the lines of Torres Vedras, the march to Vittoria, the defence of the Pyrenees, and the invasion of France were strategical triumphs of the highest order.¹ Then turn to India. Sound strategy had as much to

¹ The extraordinary foresight and power of organisation displayed by Wellington during the three years he defended Portugal have never, in my opinion, been fully appreciated. Besides constructing the lines of Torres Vedras, he established five sea-bases, one advanced base, and no less than forty magazines of consumption; he organised four lines of water-transport, on the Tagus, the Mondego, the Douro, and the Sadão; his land transport was made efficient; roads were improved; bridges and bridge-heads built; and he was fully prepared to act on any one of four different lines, each of them almost entirely distinct. Hence the freedom with which he manœuvred, and the frequent surprises he brought about. *No theatre of war was ever so thoroughly prepared.*

do with the suppression of the Great Mutiny as hard fighting. While men were stunned and appalled by the suddenness and ferocity of the outbreak, the great proconsul of the North-West was straining every nerve to send troops to Delhi; and to the recognition by Lord Lawrence that the fate of India lay there, and there only, was due in great part the vigour and determination with which the siege was pressed. The influence of the individual, even in a conflict of such extraordinary character, was once more conspicuous; and it was the same a few years later in America. In the War of Secession, where educated soldiers, comparatively speaking, were very few, and the conditions altogether novel, the trained strategist was always the dominant factor. How was it that the South maintained the unequal struggle for four long years? The odds against her were far greater than against France in 1870; and if the American theatre of war was more favourable for defence than the European, the means of organising an adequate defence were almost altogether wanting. But the man was there—or rather the men, for Lee and Stonewall Jackson should never be separated—and the defence became well-nigh impregnable. Overwhelming as was the strength of the Northern armies in Virginia, it was but seldom that their commanders were able to concentrate superior or even equal numbers on the battlefield, except when their *moral* had been so weakened that mere numbers availed nothing.

It was not until the great strategists of the North, Grant and Sherman, were given absolute authority that the situation changed. And I would ask you to note that the Confederate operations up to that time afford an admirable example of how the weaker side may be aided by fine strategy. The attitude adopted can hardly be called “defensive”; in fact “defensive” is a term which, to my mind, is very seldom applicable to either the strategy or the tactics of famous captains. Very rarely indeed do we find the really able general deliberately deciding to await his opponent’s attack. He may, for one reason or another—as was Wellington in 1810-12, Napoleon in 1814, Lee in 1862-64—be compelled to surrender the initiative. But at the worst such surrender is only temporary, and often more apparent than real. The enemy is permitted to advance, and pushes forward in the hope of winning a decisive victory; but before he can achieve his end he finds his march embarrassed by topographical obstacles, and he is met when he least expects it by a vigorous counter-stroke. It is the waiting game—the strategy which paves the way for counter-stroke, and counter-stroke in superior force—which enables small armies to conquer great; and the study of this game may be especially recommended to English soldiers. It is often argued that if our two army corps were to take part in a European war they must always expect to be met by superior numbers. This, however, is as much as to say that the strategy which would direct our two army corps would be indifferent, for it is only the unskilful leader who commits his troops to battle with the odds against him.

To disturb old and proud traditions is an unpleasing but not always an unprofitable task. The ordinary Englishman derives much comfort from

the idea that the victories of the Peninsula were won against overwhelming masses; the people of the Southern States still glory in the idea that Lee won their battles with a relatively small army; and there is hardly a Virginian who does not believe that Stonewall Jackson was invariably outnumbered when he overthrew the Federals. That there is some excuse for these pious opinions is beyond all doubt. The three great Anglo-Saxon generals were always inferior on the theatre of war; but on the field of battle they invariably fought on at least equal terms. And they made the terms equal not so much by selecting strong positions, by digging trenches, and by sound tactics, but by compelling their enemies to divide their forces, by luring them into carefully-laid traps, by meeting them in detail, and by surprising them. Most generals on the defensive are content if they can protect themselves against surprise; it was under such conditions that Wellington, Lee, and Jackson so often surprised others.

I must here introduce a word of explanation. I have said that Wellington and Lee only fought when the terms were at least equal; that is, they generally managed to decline battle until they had concentrated an equal if not superior force; and this statement may be traversed by the objection that in many of their battles they were certainly outnumbered. But, as you, Sir, have said in your Essay on War, "the strength of armies cannot be measured by counting heads." Strength is not merely a question of numbers, but of *moral*, that force which is to the physical as three to one. An army that has won a decisive victory gains far more than the mere effacement of so many of the enemy's troops. After such a conflict the fighting value of each individual soldier on the winning side is largely increased, on the defeated side proportionately depreciated. First blood is an all-important factor, and the army which wins the first battle, if its victory be complete, may thenceforward encounter superior numbers without fear of the result. Moral superiority, self-confidence, and mutual confidence, are a more than sufficient compensation for the lack of material strength. But in the first engagement the concentration of superior numbers, in civilised warfare, is almost invariably essential to success, and the true test of a great general is his power of bringing about this desirable consummation. So Wellington in the Peninsula, although his army was but a handful compared with the hosts of the invader, inspired his own troops, and demoralised those of the enemy by his successive victories at the outset. Roliça, Vimiero, and the Douro, won by superior numbers, paved the way for still greater victories, where the balance of physical strength inclined against him. So, too, Lee, in 1862, although he had at the theatre of war but 86,000 men against 200,000, concentrated the heavier force on the field of Gaines' Mill, the first great battle, and thereby won such a measure of moral superiority as enabled him to dispense with superior numbers during the remainder of the campaign.

I make no excuse for dwelling so long upon this point. It is exceedingly important that British officers should remember, first, that even the smaller army, if it is well led, need not despair of being the stronger at the decisive point; and, secondly, that the

soldiers we have the honour to command, unyielding as they are, are still susceptible to the influences of victory and defeat. Was the spirit of the troops the same after Isandlahana as when they crossed the frontier? Was there the same confidence displayed on Majuba Mountain as before Bronker's Spruit and Laing's Nek? Was the garrison of Candahar after Maiwand as thoroughly to be depended on as the men who marched to its relief? No; even with British soldiers we must begin with Vimiero and the Douro if we would end with Salamanca and Waterloo. In the first battles, numerical preponderance is essential to success. What says Napier, not only the greatest of military writers, but the most profound of military thinkers? "How often have we not heard the genius of Buonaparte slighted, and his victories talked of as destitute of merit, because at the point of attack he was superior in number to his enemies! This very fact, which has so often been converted into a sort of reproach, constitutes his greatest and truest praise. . . . He so directed his attack as at once to divide his enemy, and to fall with the mass of his own forces upon a point where their division, or the distribution of their troops, left them unable to resist him. It is not in man to defeat armies by the breath of his mouth; nor was Buonaparte commissioned, like Gideon, to confound and destroy a host with 300 men. He knew that everything depended ultimately upon physical superiority; and his genius was shown in this, that, *although outnumbered on the whole, he was always superior to his enemies at the decisive point.*"

III.

I must once more guard myself against all chance of misapprehension. I have laid much stress on the waiting game, on compelling the enemy to divide, and declining battle until the chances are favourable. It is probable, however, that there may be some here who have in their minds a particular strategical situation to which neither the examples I have quoted nor the principles I have mentioned would in the least apply. I admit the objection. First: it is very seldom indeed that historical precedents can be found to suit every, or even any, particular situation. Second: the principles of strategy, like those of tactics, are not of constant value. They are not to be blindly followed. At times more may be achieved by disregarding them than by adhering to them. For example, there is no principle on which Napoleon lays greater stress than on concentrating out of reach of the enemy. Von Moltke, on the other hand, tells us that to unite two previously separated armies on the field of battle is the most brilliant and decisive of military operations. And it will be found that many great victories have been won in defiance of Napoleon's ruling. Austerlitz, Bautzen, Vittoria, Waterloo, Königgrätz, are instances which will at once be recalled; and in the campaigns in Virginia Lee performed this feat on almost every occasion that he defeated the Northern generals. The truth is that principles are always conflicting; and the great art of the strategist consists in adjusting their rival claims, and in recognising when they may be broken with impunity. Let him learn that the so-called rules of war are merely danger-signals, warning

him of the risks he may incur if he disregard them, and he has learnt a most useful lesson.

Again, besides the principles of warfare, which to a certain extent are mechanical, dealing with the manipulation of armed bodies, there is the spirit of warfare. Success depends more on energy, on activity, on foresight, on vigilance, and on patience, than on obedience to precept or adherence to precedent; and these qualities are applicable on any theatre whatsoever. Moral means—surprise, mystery, stratagem—are weapons which may be used as effectively in the defence of London as in the advance on Khartoum. Even if the British Army were compelled to concentrate for the defence of the metropolis there would be no necessity to surrender the initiative; no reason that our leaders should not seek to bewilder, to mystify, and surprise the invader; no reason that they should not seize, and even create, opportunities of dealing with him in detail. To passively await attack in a prepared position, even with the view of counter-stroke, would be feeble strategy indeed. Think for a moment what we should renounce if the whole army was kept idle behind earthworks until the attack developed. We should renounce all chance of taking advantage of the enemy's mistakes; we should allow him to select the time, the direction, and the place for his decisive effort—the psychological moment and the vulnerable point; we should give him the opportunity of manœuvring, of changing his base and line of operations, of bewildering us with feints, of harassing our troops, and of mystifying our generals; we should leave him perfectly free to frame his plans and move his masses; and, lastly, his mental equilibrium would be undisturbed, and the mental equilibrium of the opposing general is not the least important factor in war. But if our warfare were urged in the right spirit, if the weapons of the strategist as well as of the tactician were skillfully employed, if the moral influences were appreciated at their right value, the invader, like Napoleon at Waterloo, might be lured to his destruction. Hear the words of a general who, with an army that never exceeded 17,000 men, won five victories in succession, and paralysed for the time being a host more than tenfold his strength:—"There are two things," said Stonewall Jackson, "never to be lost sight of by a military commander. Always mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy, if possible, and when you strike and overcome him, never give up the pursuit so long as your men have strength to follow; for an army routed, if hotly pursued, becomes panic-stricken, and can then be defeated by half their number. The other rule is never to fight against heavy odds, if by any possible manœuvring you can hurl your force on only a part, and that the weakest part, of your enemy and crush it . . . The business of the soldier is to fight. Armies are not called out to dig trenches, to throw up earthworks, to live in camps, but to find the enemy and strike him, and do him all the possible damage in the shortest possible time. To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all the fruits of victory is the secret of successful war." Again, at the beginning of 1863, just before his untimely death at Chancellorsville, he said:—"We must make this campaign an exceedingly active one. Only thus can a weaker country

cope with a stronger; it must make up in activity what it lacks in strength. A defensive campaign can only be made successful by taking the offensive at the proper time. Napoleon never waited for his adversary to become fully prepared, but struck him the first blow."

Once more I must be careful. I would not have it thought that Stonewall Jackson advocated a wasteful and reckless offensive. With all his extraordinary enterprise, there never was a more prudent and cool-headed leader. Moreover, an active strategy, meaning thereby the strategy which is always prepared for counter-stroke, and which never misses an opportunity, does not necessarily imply offensive tactics. There are, undoubtedly, great moral advantages on the side of the assailant. But attack is not always the better policy; although, if it be well-timed, it is not necessarily the more costly. I do not, for instance, altogether agree with those who hold that an English army is bound to the defensive because it cannot afford to lose men. In the first place, our reserves, in proportion to the fighting force, are as large as those of any other Power. In the second place, suppose that we had 20,000 men, and our adversary 30,000. If we could concentrate our whole force against three detachments, each 10,000 strong, in succession, we should probably lose fewer men than if we were to defend a position against 30,000; and while success in the one case would be certain, in the other it would be problematical. But our adversary may not be so confiding as to split up his army into fractions; and in such conditions, or even when numbers are nearly equal, the defensive, *ceteris paribus*, is often the safer course. Again, it may be sometimes possible to induce an inferior adversary to attack us in position, as Wellington induced Napoleon to attack him at Waterloo. As a rule, however, if the enemy is divided he must be attacked, and attacked speedily; for if he be allowed to escape, he will most certainly concentrate.

IV.

I trust it will not be thought that in exalting the spirit of war I am decrying the importance of ground and the value of field entrenchments. Few and far between as have been the occasions on which an English army has found itself bound to the defensive, no student of our military history can forget Torres Vedras and Waterloo, nor any American Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, and Cold Harbour. But the student of strategy should understand the relative value of the processes of war, and defensive positions, or, as I would rather call them, positions in readiness for counter-attack, are not of the paramount importance which is often ascribed to them. It is undoubtedly a very great advantage indeed if the battle-ground be favourable; yet, as a general rule, it is strategical and not tactical considerations which dictate the position, and the tactician's business is to make the best use of the ground on which he finds himself. For example, in the campaign of 1815, Wellington's choice of a position at Waterloo was not based upon the fact that the ridge north of La Belle Alliance was strong for defence, but on the fact that it covered the Wavre road, by which the Prussians could most readily join him, and also the two roads by which Napoleon would most probably attack him. That he put

the natural features to the best use goes without saying ; but it was the consummate strategy of the allies, and not the strength of the position, which was the decisive factor in the fight.

It is true that Napoleon has said "War is a business of positions"; but even a small knowledge of his campaigns makes it perfectly clear that it was strategical and not tactical positions to which he alluded. And it is well to bear this in mind. Strong tactical positions have often proved a snare as deadly as historic fortresses. The French, in the Metz campaign, suffered as much from the one as from the other. Wörth, Colombey, and Gravelotte were tactically so strong that their attractions were irresistible. Not only the marshals but their subordinates succumbed to their fatal influence. They could not bring themselves to abandon ground which offered so many advantages. Strategical considerations were disregarded; superior force was thought unnecessary, and punishment followed with unerring steps. Napoleon, when he made use of the phrase which I have quoted, knew that there are few positions which cannot be turned, few entrenched camps which cannot be avoided. Military history teaches us that strong and prepared positions, even Waterloo itself, owe their reputation more to the blunders of the assailant than to their own virtues.

But to rely on the blunders of our enemies is to trust too much to fortune. We cannot expect that they will run their heads against our front with the same reckless impetuosity as Masséna at Busaco, the Russians at Plevna, Burnside at Fredericksburg, or Grant at Cold Harbour. We must expect from the outset the skilful manœuvres which eventually made those positions untenable. And to meet those manœuvres we must rely, in the first instance, on carefully-selected strategical positions, on positions like Waterloo, *where concentration of superior force is certain*, where a decisive counter-stroke is practicable, where manœuvre can be met by manœuvre, where our own lines of communication are well protected, whence those of the enemy can be effectively assailed. If these requirements are not fulfilled, the position is indifferent; and it is for this reason that the location of halting-places, of camps and bivouacs, is of such immense importance. A few miles one way or another may make all the difference. For example, in the recent operations in the Soudan, Mahmoud, advancing on Berber, leaves the Nile and takes post on the Atbara. The Sirdar responds by moving out a few miles towards the river mouth, and the Mahdist general is completely checkmated; he can move neither back nor forward. And here the training of peace may have a prejudicial effect. In peace, the health and comfort of the troops are the first consideration; in war, everything must give way to strategy. If the fields of Colombey, Vionville, and Gravelotte were proposed for autumn manœuvres on a large scale, the proposal would certainly be rejected. The field of Waterloo could be set aside for the same reason, *i.e.*, that the streams and wells would not supply a single army corps. Yet on the arid plains round Metz, 350,000 men and 80,000 horses bivouacked and fought for many days, and over 50,000 wounded called in vain for the water it was impossible to provide for them.

To show the importance of location, we may take the operations in Belgium in 1815. When Napoleon concentrated so suddenly on the frontier, the allied armies, under no apprehension of being immediately attacked, were dispersed over a front of ninety miles. What was the result? Blücher, concentrating at Sombreff, had to fight at Ligny without the aid of his Fourth Army Corps; while Wellington was placed in a situation even more uncomfortable. When the news came that the French were advancing the Duke's troops were so disposed that concentration, at a suitable point, was exceedingly difficult. If Napoleon took the Mons-Hal road, as the Duke had much reason to fear, the Anglo-Dutch army might be caught in the process of concentration, unless indeed it concentrated to the rear, and then, if the French advance proved to be only a feint, the Prussians would be left isolated; if Napoleon took the Charleroi-Sombreff road, and held Quatre Bras, or even threatened it, with a strong detachment, it would be impossible for the Anglo-Dutch to give direct aid to the Prussians or strike Napoleon in flank. In consequence of this dispersion Ligny was lost. The French advanced so suddenly that concentration was impossible. "Napoleon," said Wellington to the Duke of Richmond, "has humbugged me," and the campaign was begun under most inauspicious circumstances. Yet many eminent critics have shown us how the cantonments of the two armies might have been arranged so as to provide for all emergencies. Had even the First and Third British Divisions been concentrated at Brain le Comte instead of extending as far as Enghien, nine miles north-west, and the Fifth Division been placed at Waterloo instead of at Brussels, twelve miles north, a strong force might have been concentrated at Quatre Bras early on June 16th, and Ney have been unable to protect Napoleon's flank. On the value of *time* in war it is needless to enlarge; but *place* and *distance* are equally important; and if time, according to Napoleon, is counted by minutes, distance is measured by furlongs.

V.

"Strategy," says Napier, "is the most important and difficult part of a general's duty," and it would seem, therefore, that a study of its principles is absolutely essential. The opinion, however, is not uncommon that the only thing necessary for its application is common sense, or rather of military common sense, *i.e.*, the common sense of a soldier who has practical knowledge, if not of war, at least of the mechanism of war, and above all, of the main factor in all military questions, whether of strategy, tactics, or organisation, the men in the ranks. And no doubt, to a certain extent, this is perfectly true. The very ablest statesmen have failed most egregiously as strategists, not so much from want of knowledge of principles, but from want of that knowledge which is common to almost all who have long breathed the military atmosphere. The man who has been a week on short rations, or forty-eight hours without rations at all, knows more of the real nature of war than Jomini and Clausewitz could teach him. But actual experience and practical knowledge are not sufficient to make a strategist, any more than pure theory. In the first place, all experience

is limited, and can only be made comprehensive by drawing on the experience of others; in the second place, no great soldier has neglected theoretical study; in the third place, many experienced generals, although, like Ney and Blücher, most able tacticians, have been indifferent strategists; and, lastly, the common sense which is untrained, which is unaccustomed to consider the problems presented to the commander in the field, is common sense at a very serious disadvantage.

Admitting, however, that strategy must be studied, it is not easy to say how and by whom it should be studied. To take the last point first. It has been asserted that for a hundred who find a knowledge of tactics necessary, there is but one who need trouble himself about strategy. I cannot think that this observation is altogether sound. The grand operations of a campaign are undoubtedly directed by the few, the minor by the many; but it is very difficult to predict that an officer will not one day find himself amongst the few, especially in our own Army. Our wars are different to those of other nations. One great campaign every thirty or forty years is not what we have to prepare for, but a small campaign, perhaps two or three small campaigns, every twelve months; and in these small campaigns, carried out in uncivilised countries, under very great difficulties, by officers of comparatively humble rank, strategy plays, or should play, a leading part. Again, as I have already suggested, the defence of our inland frontiers, in very many cases, is perforce confided to a large number of officers, who, if they have not actually to lead the troops, have to collect in time of peace the information—topographical, political, and military—on which, in war, the general must base his plans. It is almost unnecessary to say that the character and value of such information must depend very greatly on the strategical acumen of those who collect it. Lastly, there is the work of the cavalry. Their responsibilities as regards information are even greater than those of officers reconnoitring the theatre of war. It was said by Stonewall Jackson of a great cavalry soldier, who was killed while serving under his command, that "his sagacity was almost intuitive in divining the purposes and movements of the enemy"; and this exceedingly useful quality must have been based, to a great extent, on a knowledge of strategy. Without such knowledge a cavalry officer would probably miss altogether the significance of certain movements; he would leave unobserved the most important points, send his patrols in the wrong directions, and in reporting on the country omit all reference to the features of strategical moment.

There are many of you, I have no doubt, who are acquainted with that most practical of books on cavalry, Colonel Tomkinson's *Diary in the Peninsular War*. The writer was nineteen years of age when he first saw active service in 1809, and he remained in the field, with hardly a break, up to the occupation of Paris in 1815. His knowledge of strategy was undoubtedly drawn from his experience, supplemented, in all probability, by discussion of the events before him with men of larger acquirements than his own; but I am sure that those who have read his roughly-written notes have been struck by the breadth of view therein displayed, and, at

the same time, have recognised what an admirable reconnoitring officer this young subaltern must have been. If Wellington had many like him, and I believe myself he had, he owed far more to his cavalry than is generally suspected.

But in default of actual experience on such a theatre as the Peninsula, and of the object-lessons which it affords, how is the art of strategy to be mastered? Military history certainly furnishes us with examples of strategical problems and their solution. But historians are seldom concerned with analysing the process of solution; they do not give the exact *data*; and they assume that the reader has a thorough comprehension of principles. In a word, they write for experts and not for tyros. To my mind the first need of the student is an elementary treatise; an explanation of how "war on the map" is made, at what the strategist should aim, and by what means he may attain his end. At the present moment, with the single exception, Sir, of your own remarks on strategy in your Essay on War, I am not aware that such a guide exists. Hamley is certainly a great book. For generals and staff officers, dealing with the defence of frontiers and the choice of lines of operations, it is invaluable. But as a practical guide to strategy in the field it is not entirely satisfactory. It is an aid to study, not to practice. In the description of campaigns the keynote, that is, the aim of the commander, seems often wanting; and the real objective of the operations is obscured by the number of side-issues. Thus the student, unless he has been assisted by an experienced instructor, closes the book with his head full of manœuvres and combinations and not much else. He has read a great deal about rectangular bases, re-entering frontiers, parallel and transverse obstacles, but he has heard little of great principles; and if he is set to solve a strategical problem he finds that he has no clear idea of what to do or how to do it. I do not for a moment say that such points as the objective, as the action of a defending army, as the importance of concentration, are not alluded to in Hamley, but they are not to my mind made sufficiently impressive. Again, Hamley deliberately omitted all reference to the spirit of war, to moral influences, to the effect of rapidity, of surprise, and secrecy; and, as I have already said, these, and not mere manœuvres, are the best weapons of the strategist. It is possible, however, to rectify these deficiencies. A statement, compiled, Sir, in great part from the Essay on War, which appears as an appendix to the lecture, may perhaps go some way towards it. I am well aware that this statement is capable of improvement. Many of its clauses require much explanation, and each paragraph would furnish a text for half-a-dozen lectures. But, at the same time, I have good reason to believe that while making military history more intelligible, and Hamley more useful, it will simplify the study and assist the practice of strategy. It will not, however, make that study less laborious. A list of principles, unaccompanied by examples, is not in itself of much value. To have such by heart would be of little service to a general in the field. Unless he had witnessed, or had read and analysed, the way in which the principles laid down have been actually applied, it would profit

him not at all. To grasp the full significance of these principles, it is essential that he should have reflected on several examples, drawn either from his own experience or from the experience of others, of their successful application. And he should have done even more than this. It is only when principles have become so impressed on the mind as to present themselves instinctively for consideration wherever a situation is dealt with, that a knowledge of them is of real and abiding value.

But such impression is not easily made. Will reading make it? Hardly. The printed page seldom leaves more than a superficial mark. Will experience make it? Possibly, but by no means certainly. No; the same method must be adopted in teaching strategy as in teaching tactics. Knowledge can only be made instinctive by practice, by constant practice, and by practice only.

To be really useful this practice must rest on a certain amount of knowledge. Principles must be mastered, and examples analysed, or at least there must be some experience of war. But this last, as I have more than once suggested, is seldom sufficient; and how the preliminary preparation is to be carried out is a difficult question. We can hardly establish schools for strategy, or add a new subject to an already bloated system of examinations. We know that the time of our officers is very fully occupied, and that over-much sedentary work is the very worst training for service in the field.

So we must trust, I think, in the main, to individual zeal, to ambition, to the object-lessons which contemporary campaigns present, and to the desire for knowledge which is growing every day. I believe, however, that much more might be done in the way of making young officers familiar with the grand operations of war. I do not for a moment suggest that we can make every cadet a strategist; but we can at least give them a grounding which will form a substantial basis for future study. Military history, I am aware, is much out of favour. At one time "Napier's Peninsular War" was taken up by candidates for commissions; Wellington's campaigns were very thoroughly studied and ably taught at Sandhurst; and in the examination for entrance to the Staff College the historical papers were marked as highly as any other. But times have changed. Our future Wellingtons know much of the Wars of the Roses, but nothing of Waterloo. At the Royal Military College a few lectures, concerned principally with the tactics of a single campaign, are the extent of the teaching; and the candidates for the Staff College are deterred by the small number of marks allotted to strategy from devoting much time to this important subject. Why the history of the Peninsular campaign should have been discarded in favour of the history of the Middle Ages I utterly fail to understand. Are politics, government, the growth of laws and nations, sciences more simple than the art of war? Are cadets incapable of comprehending the operations which, a few years later, if they join the Staff College, they are called upon to study and to criticise? Is the experience and knowledge of eighteen so much inferior to the experience and knowledge of four-and-twenty? Is, lastly,

an acquaintance with the binomial theorem more important to a staff officer than a good grasp of strategic principles? Such, however, are the ideas that have come down to us, and we have to make the best of them.

I would advise those who would prepare for the practice of which I am about to speak, to make themselves familiar with two phases of warfare; first, the mechanical process by which the troops are supplied and moved; second, the methods by which a general obtains information. A knowledge of what goes on *behind* the army is essential to the practice of strategy; and of little less importance is a knowledge of the means and of the difficulty of obtaining accurate and timely intelligence. Let an officer realise that the existence of an army as a fighting force is bound up with the security of its bases, its magazines, and its lines of supply; let him realise how slow and exhausting, even with the best arrangements, are the movements of large bodies, how great the privation of the men, how absorbing the pre-occupation of the generals; let him realise what is meant by the pregnant phrase "the fog of war"; let him learn the difference between the real and the theoretical, between manœuvres where everybody knows everything and war where nobody knows anything; let him understand that the commanders walk in such darkness that they are always susceptible to mystification and misleading; and then, and not till then, he will be fitted to deal with strategical problems.

I use the word "problem" advisedly, for the practice I advocate, and the only practice possible, is the working out in peace, either when studying campaigns, at war-games, at staff rides, instructional tours, or manœuvres, of the various strategical problems which present themselves. It is no new method. Most of you are aware that it has long been followed in Germany, and that at the *Kriegsakademie* von Moltke himself, during his long tenure of office as Chief of the Staff, set and criticised the problems to be solved by the students. You know, too, that so essential is the practice rated in Germany, which indeed owes much to her strategists, that the best students at the *Kriegsakademie*, after their course is finished, spend a whole year solving problems under the direct supervision of the higher authorities. In America the Naval War College pursues the same system of instruction as its great prototype in Berlin; and not long ago, when visiting that institution, I found the officers working out an imaginary campaign in those very waters where they are to-day putting theory into practice. Our own Staff College is not behind the times, the best of the papers being read by the Commander-in-Chief; and almost within the last few months, at the various staff rides in which so many regimental officers have been engaged, the opportunities for strategical instruction have not been allowed to slip.

On the benefit of this method it is hardly necessary to enlarge. "War on the map," unlike tactics, can be practised in peace under almost exactly the same conditions as in war; and the experience gained at the war-game, and more especially at staff rides and manœuvres, must therefore be of the greatest value on active service. The officer accustomed,

under competent criticism, to the solution of problems has the great advantage that he knows how to set about his task, and will thus lose no time. He recognises at once what it is essential to consider and what may be disregarded; he goes straight to the point to which his attention should be directed; he misses none of the many factors to be considered; he has learned how to reconcile their conflicting claims; he has the great principles in mind; and last, but not least, he has acquired the power of thinking thoroughly, of stating his views clearly, and of coming to a definite decision.

As regards the actual procedure to be followed I have little to say. At war-games and staff rides several officers, in addition to those commanding the sides, should be told off to write what are called "appreciations of the situation." The term, borrowed from the German, was inspired by von Moltke's maxim, "The essential thing in war is on every occasion to appreciate the situation rightly, and to make the arrangements best suited to it"; and it has been defined by Sir Redvers Buller as "a military review of the actual situation, culminating in a statement of the measures recommended to meet it." These "appreciations" should be criticised and discussed by the director or chief umpire; and whether they are sound or otherwise, whether any of the factors have been overlooked, or any precautions neglected, will generally appear in the course of the operations. I may add that it has been found not only practicable but useful at autumn manœuvres to ask staff officers to write short proposals for action; and a form which appears in the appendix may serve as a rough guide for first attempts at "appreciations."

Another very useful strategical exercise is the deduction of inferences. I have already spoken of "the fog of war," and I may remind you that a commander in war bases his action, not so much on the intelligence he receives from his scouts and spies, as on the inferences he draws from the reported movements and condition of the enemy. In fact, "the fog of war," even in the most favourable circumstances, is so dense as to compel him to act on "probabilities." The wider his knowledge of war in general, of strategy in particular, and of human nature as affected by war, and the acuter the penetration acquired by constant practice, the nearer to the truth will be his deductions. He will naturally have forecast, so far as possible, every movement that the enemy may undertake against him, and will have prepared, in his own mind, the orders applicable to each; but it is his skill in interpreting trivial indications that will secure the time needed for their issue and execution. Of what practice can do in this respect I have constant evidence at the Staff College. Not only are the situations at war-games and staff rides there dealt with, but those presented by campaigns which are actually being fought out beyond the seas; and although the intelligence, gathered for the most part from the daily press, is usually exceedingly scanty, in very many cases the predictions have proved remarkably accurate.

There is but one more point to which I would allude. Let no soldier run away with the idea that strategy is a pedantic and inglorious

art, calling for nothing more than hard thinking, careful calculation, maps, compasses, and the power of the pen. It is no bookworm's business. "It is in strategy," says Napier, "that the great qualities with which a general may be endowed will have ample room to display themselves; fine perception, unerring judgement, rapid decision, and unwearied activity both of mind and body, are here all requisite." Courage, the soldier's virtue, is as essential to the practical strategist as to the practical tactician. "He needs," writes Prince Kraft, "a special qualification which the theorist can dispense with, viz., strength of mind, which, undeterred by the knowledge that the lives of thousands depend on his decisions, will enable him clearly to decide what to do in the midst of disturbing elements. . . . Every war will still be a matter of venture. The strategist must therefore renounce all hope of being absolutely certain of the result. He who is not prepared for risks will win no great success, and as in war they must be run, he had better not meddle with it. When to dare and what to dare is the question for consideration. His attention must not be directed to one point only, but all eventualities must be thought over. Nothing, even the most extraordinary action of the enemy, must surprise the strategist. He must be prepared for everything by previous reflection, and be ready at once with the proper reply. All these things require gifts given to but few men, a comprehensive mind and a strong will."

APPENDIX I.

Strategical Procedure.

- A. The object of the strategist is to concentrate superior force on the field of battle.
 - B. This object is attained by fighting the enemy in detail.
 - C. The main objective is the enemy's army, but the preliminary objectives may be his isolated detachments, or the strategical points which he is compelled to protect.
 - D. To fight the enemy in detail he must be either :—
 1. Encountered before he can concentrate. [1796, 1805, 1809 (Portugal), 1813 (Spain), 1815, 1862 (Virginia), 1866, 1870.]
 2. Induced to divide after concentration. [1814, 1862, 1877.]
- (1.) To encounter an enemy before he can concentrate, the means are :—
- More rapid mobilisation. [1866, 1870.]
- Surprise; effected by activity, secrecy, feints, and an unexpected line of operation.
- (2.) To induce an enemy to remain divided until the blow is prepared, the means are :—
- The skilful use of detached forces, threatening his line of communications or some vital point.
- Concealment, begetting uncertainty and apprehension.
- Spreading false reports.
- [1796, 1805, 1812 (Portugal and Spain), 1813 (Spain), 1814, 1862, 1870.]

(3.) To induce an enemy to divide after concentration, the means are :—

Those employed in the previous case.

Drawing him forward into a “zone of manœuvre” where topographical obstacles will embarrass him. [1810 (Torres Vedras), 1814, 1862.]

E. Superior force need not necessarily be physical force. Moral force is a more important factor; and whether the physical superiority is there or not, moral superiority should always be secured at the decisive point.

This may be effected by :—

1. First blood.
2. Upsetting the moral equilibrium of the enemy's commander.
3. Destroying the confidence of his troops.
4. Forcing him to fight at a disadvantage—
 - (a) On ground which he has not prepared, with which he is unfamiliar, which he has to occupy in haste and confusion, where the topography is against him, and where defeat spells disaster.
 - (b) On ground where he is so situated as regards his communications that he will only think of preserving himself from defeat, and not of delivering a counter-stroke.
5. By striking him unexpectedly from two different directions.

[Ulm, Vittoria, Bautzen, Gaines' Mill, Second Manassas, Königgrätz, Vionville.]

The means to be employed are :—

For 2. Keeping him in uncertainty; crushing his detachments; threatening or cutting his line of supply; preventing him from communicating with other bodies of troops; bewildering him by feints; mystifying and misleading him. [The Valley Campaign, 1862.]

For 3. Crushing detachments; cutting off supplies; inducing the general to give counter-orders, to change his plans, and to make useless marches.

Declining battle until the propitious moment.

For 4. Manœuvring against the line of supply or a vital point. Changing the base, and adopting a new and unexpected line of operations.

Concealment.

Hard marching and vigorous attack.

F. On the defensive the concentration of superior force on the battle-field may be prepared for by :—

1. Concealing the point of concentration and the disposition of the troops.
2. Selecting of a favourable “zone of manœuvre.”

3. Establishing alternative bases and lines of supply.
4. The use of detached forces, as in D (2).
5. Spreading false information.
6. Luring the enemy into a trap by an apparent dispersion of the defending forces. [Austerlitz, Busaco, Waterloo, Second Manassas, Fredericksturg.]
7. Feigned retreat, inducing the enemy to make mistakes. [Salamanca.]

APPENDIX II.

Appreciation of a Situation.

"What is wanted is a military review of the actual situation, culminating in a statement of the measures recommended to meet it."—*Sir Redvers Buller.*

A. A clear and concise statement of:—

1. Position of our own forces. Position of enemy's forces, so far as known.
2. Object we have in view, with reasons for and against
3. Factors which affect the attainment of this object, which *may* include some of the following :—
 - Politics and finance.
 - Relative numbers and armament.
 - Vulnerable points.
 - Moral.*
 - Topography and roads.
 - Communications.
 - Supply and transport.
 - Weather.
 - Time and space.
 - Character of opponent.
 - Apparent object of enemy.

Note 1. The position, object, strength, and *moral* of the enemy, as well as the character of his generals, have generally to be inferred from what has already happened. We must act on probabilities, for we cannot have certainties.

Note 2. It is better to consider first how to attain our own object, and not merely to prevent the enemy attaining his. To do the latter is to surrender the initiative.

B. A definite proposal for the attainment of our object :—

Note 1. The enemy's vulnerable points often give clue to the soundest manœuvre.

Note 2. A *practical* proposal, and not a general idea, is what is wanted. The distribution of troops should be given in detail, the lines of march, and, *if necessary*, the methods of supply.

Note 3. The following rules are useful :—

- Concentration of superior force, moral and physical, at the decisive point is the grand rule of war.
 - Simplicity is better than ingenuity.
 - Complicated operations are very dangerous.
 - Reduce detachments to a minimum; but detached forces are always necessary for feints and secondary attacks.
 - Try to realise the situation from the enemy's point of view.
 - Always endeavour to mystify and mislead.
 - Surprise is the greatest of all foes.
 - Omit no precaution to conceal your own dispositions.
 - Attack when and where you are least expected.
 - If you can upset the mental equilibrium of the enemy's general, you reduce the strength of his army by 75 per cent.
 - The exterior lines are more dangerous than the interior.
 - More than one line of operation is dangerous.
 - Possession of the interior lines, if you have not time and space to manœuvre, may end in your being crushed.
 - The force which first threatens the enemy's communications compels the enemy to conform to its movements.
 - If you have made proper arrangements it is probable that the enemy knows no more about you than you know about him.
 - Never allow your cavalry to get so far away that it cannot be present on the battle-field.
 - There can be no certainty in war, but you must make as certain as possible that you can supply your men.
 - Never take counsel of your fears. If the chances are in your favour, you must risk something.
 - Remember that the enemy is just as frightened of you as you of him.
 - Do not refuse a line of operations because it is difficult or risky. Its difficulty and risk may cause the enemy to relax his vigilance.
- C. (*Not always necessary.*) A statement of the counter-manceuvres open to the enemy, and a refutation of the objections which may be raised against your proposed course of action.

Observations.

1. The report will be clearer if the several statements are given in tabular form, lettered and numbered.
2. Officers will decide for themselves, when discussing a situation, what portions of the above may be disregarded. The form is intended to serve only as a general guide.
3. Solutions of problems worked out thus are of great value. They may not often be required, in the shape of a written report, on service; but they create the habit of considering situations in logical form, of grasping all factors, of coming to definite conclusions, and of putting yourself in your enemy's place.

4. Papers of this kind are by no means rare in military literature. Wellington's Despatches, Napoleon's Correspondence, and the Official Records of the American Civil War, contain numberless examples, written in the field. Von Moltke's project for the invasion of France, dated two years before 1870, and given in Section I. of the German Official Account, is an admirable model; and his "appreciations" in 1866 have been translated in the R.U.S.I. JOURNAL by Mr. Spenser Wilkinson. Consult also the official history of 1882, and of the Nile Campaign, 1884-5.

Captain W. JAMES (late R.E.):—I am sure we have all listened to Colonel Henderson's lecture with the greatest pleasure. I am very glad to see that at the beginning of his lecture he has attacked my old friend the statesman. The statesman has a great deal to answer for, more perhaps in England than in any other country; because, I suppose that in no other country which is called civilised have statesmen been so absolutely, so entirely, so grossly ignorant of the art of war as they are in this unfortunate land. The lessons which they ought to have learned times out of mind, but which they never appear to have appreciated yet, are the impossibility of improvising forces at the beginning of a war, the absolute necessity for rapid mobilisation, and the absolute need for accurate information. Frederick the Great said when he was fighting Marshal Soubise (a gentleman whose fame is chiefly connected with the sauce which bears his name), that he had twenty-five cooks and one spy; whereas he, Frederick, had twenty-five spies and one cook. I do not know exactly the amount of secret-service money that is expended in this country, but I would venture to say that it is far less than that expended on spies in any other country of Europe. I am convinced that unless we do spend money in that direction we shall find ourselves at the outbreak of any war not exactly in the position we ought to occupy, because the fog of war will throw a dense cloud around us, and we shall fail for want of that information with regard to the enemy's forces and distribution, and plan of action, which is an absolute necessity for the proper arrangement of our forces when the war commences. Probably the best example of what I have said, with regard to statesmen, is to be derived from the war of the American Rebellion. That war, I do not hesitate to say, came to an unfavourable conclusion principally because our statesmen were absolutely ignorant of how to carry on war. I am quite prepared to admit that the tools with which it was conducted were not up to what was required of them, that our generals did not display any great military knowledge in conducting the operations; but a tolerably intimate study of that particular war leads me to believe that, bad as the English generals were, they were made worse by the wrong direction which was insisted upon by the statesmen who were supposed to rule and govern our military operations in those days. Now, in foreign countries you must remember that the principle of *Silent leges inter arma* has always obtained; and you will find that when France or Germany, or any of the great countries of Europe are concerned, it is the soldiers who direct the actual operations of war. It is not the same with the Anglo-Saxon races—it is not the same in England, and it is not the same in the United States. It appears to me that we are getting a most patent example of that when we find an excellent politician of the name of Bryan appointed to command a regiment. Poor man; he is as ignorant of war as it is possible for anybody to be, and that is saying a great deal. We see politics ruling in the United States just as they ruled in the time of the Secession. Just as Benjamin and Staunton did their best to ruin their respective sides, so the politicians of the United States at the present moment are doing their best, by placing incompetent men in office, to ruin their operations. Possibly the day may come when they may see the folly of this. But in England I never feel sure that we have emerged from what I may call the Pitt-Aberdeen state of existence. Mr. Pitt the younger was an excellent statesman in many

says, and a man of high aspirations and ideals; but he was not a war minister; and I do not think it is disrespectful to say that the late Lord Aberdeen also was not a war minister. Pitt frittered our forces away all over the surface of the globe at the beginning of this century, and Lord Aberdeen did not understand that when you go to war the sooner you hit hard the better. The necessity for numbers, on which the lecturer has laid so much stress, at the outbreak of a war is, of course, again a matter for the statesman to decide. Whatever may be the opinion of the soldier as to their necessity, if the statesman is not prepared to furnish the soldier with those numbers, he will have to do his best with the few that are given him. One remark I wish to make is on Napoleon's view about having a single line of operations. I have often thought—and I think you will probably agree with me—that this was due entirely to the fact that he wrote his dictum on this point at St. Helena after the Waterloo campaign. He had been considerably thrashed by the dual line of operations of the Anglo-Belgian army and the Prussians, and he always tried to belittle their operations; in fact, he endeavoured to prove at St. Helena that he ought to have won; that so far as the actual manœuvres were concerned he had done a great deal better than his opponents had. Of course, we know what the actual result was. It is remarkable that he should have done it, because we know that in 1813, at the battle of Bautzen, he used exactly the same idea as he deprecated with regard to Blücher and Wellington. Secondly, I would draw your attention to the fact that with modern large armies, with the enormous forces that are now dealt with in the theatre of war, a single line of operations is absolutely impossible. You cannot manœuvre 600,000 men along one road. Even in 1812, when Napoleon had tried this principle himself—you may put aside the two forces, the Austrian and the Prussian forces on either wing as not taking any important part in the campaign—the mere physical difficulties of his defence brought him to a standstill and ruined him. Moltke, in 1866, saw the wisdom of using a double line of operations, and by his able concentration at the battle of Königgrätz he thoroughly defeated the forces opposed to him. You will always find in future wars one, two, or three lines of operations, because it is impossible to concentrate the forces of a large army if you adhere to one line of operations only. That, I think, is the central point, that whether you see one or whether you see two or more lines of operations on the day of battle, the principle still holds good of being able to concentrate the whole force to deliver a telling blow against your opponent. There is another point which comes out, to which the lecturer has alluded, viz., it is only in modern times that we hear publicly preached the doctrine that the first duty of the strategist is to annihilate his enemy. It is true, reading between the lines, you will see this lay at the foundation of the operations of Napoleon, but it is only really in recent years that this has been laid down as a canon of the art of war. Now, with regard to the study of military history, I cordially support every word the lecturer has said. I have never been able to understand why the history of our wars with foreign nations should not be just as interesting, just as good a basis of teaching, as the internal dissensions to which you have alluded. I am going to speak very plainly. There is a reason why all this has been abandoned, and the reason is this, that at the public schools—to our shame be it said—the history of England is never systematically taught; the public-school boy enters the world with an absolute ignorance of the great facts that have gone to make his country what it is. He knows nothing at all about it, and the reason is a plain and simple one, that the average public-school master has been educated in Latin and Greek and nothing else, and he thinks outside these subjects there is nothing else worth teaching anybody. The consequence is, we have got into this position, that the history of our country never is taught, it never has been taught, and never will be taught until parents found a Trades Union for the Reform of Public Schools, and boycott them if they do not bring up their children on a reasonable and proper system of education. As to the training for the Staff College, I happen to know a

a distinguished officer (I will not mention his name), who said to me:—"James, it is all very well to say that a study of military history is very important; but the only thing you can examine a fellow in is mathematics." Well, I deny that. But it is a lamentable thing at the present moment that there is absolutely no inducement whatever with regard to professional success for an officer to study strategy. If he desires from his own innate love of the art of war to do so he will do it, but certainly there is no inducement in the present curriculum for entrance into the Staff College to induce him to give anything but the most cursory glance at the subjects as they are at present marked for entrance to that institution.

Lieut.-Colonel E. GUNTER (late East Lancashire Regiment):—I only want to say a very few words merely to back up what the lecturer—to whom we are much indebted for a very interesting lecture—said in regard to the teaching of strategy, and I hope he will use his influence with the authorities to introduce some teaching of strategy into the Sandhurst course. Notwithstanding what has been said of the difficulties of examination, I do not see why a limited course of strategy in the simplest possible form should not be also introduced into the examination for Militia candidates for the Army. Somehow or other the candidates will not read military history, although we know that "Napier" reads like a novel and is a most delightful book in every way. Still in these days, as the lecturer remarked, the officer has so much to do and so many subjects to study that unless the subject of strategy is made compulsory by our military schools, and to a certain extent more encouraged than it is among the officers of the Army, they will not find the time for it. Without going into any detail of the matter as to the methods, I only simply wish to express the hope that the authorities may see their way to revive the study of strategy which formerly was carried on at Sandhurst. As an old cadet I can say that there is no part of our teaching there which I look back to with greater delight, or which was more interesting to us than our early lectures in strategical methods and campaigns. I think it was my old friend and professor Colonel Charles Cornwallis Chesney who was the first to really bring that in, though the others who followed him were able men. I am sure it would be of the greatest interest to cadets, and of great profit to the officers of the future.

The CHAIRMAN (Major-General J. F. Maurice):—I do not think there is much that need be said. Colonel Henderson does not wish to reply to anything, because everybody has agreed with him. But I think I may say with reference to what Captain James has said as to the reward being adequate to officers to study matters of strategy and military history, which he very wisely has run together, that the practical result is this, that nobody is going to succeed much in war without making a pretty close study of them. Lord Wolseley has said to me in his quiet way, "At the time I was (as I suppose every fellow does) going over these campaigns of Napoleon"—and so on, and so on, mentioning many other things he did—"I worked out so and so." I wish you to notice that he makes a practical assumption that he did no more than other people; but I am afraid that that does not happen to be quite consistent with the facts. A good many other people do not do the work that he did, and very largely at least his success is due to the fact that he found himself among a number of other people who thought it unnecessary to give attention to their profession, while he did give most careful attention to it. It was exactly the same thing in the case of Napoleon, as we all know. The more closely you follow it out, the more you find that the work and time that he devoted to the study of military art, as he has explained it himself, was superior to that of any of his contemporaries. I think I might almost say that it was as superior as was his genius in other respects. The two went together. Wellington did exactly the same thing. He said he had been from the very beginning of his life devoting a certain number of hours every day to the theoretic study of his

profession. I do not know where you are going to find any men who have done very much, and have come to the front, who have not devoted themselves to such study. All you want to do is to make young officers understand how all-important to them it is, and to give them the opportunities of study which are absolutely essential if they are to do any good service afterwards. They may, of course, be successful in some other line of life; but I do not see how they can possibly understand what the meaning of war is, unless they learn it from the experience of others. In fact, in nine cases out of ten, Sir Charles Napier's statement is absolutely true, that a man finds himself in a certain position in command of men and with great responsibility, and the thing in which he fails in is not want of ability, but want of previous study of the things with which he finds himself compelled to deal. You cannot get that knowledge how to act except by experience, and as you cannot get your own experience except by perpetual war—which, happily, does not fall to the lot of many men—there is no other way of getting it except by reading the history of war and studying the experiences of others; that is, in fact, the principles of strategy. Therefore, I think we owe a great debt to Colonel Henderson for having pressed home the fact that no adequate steps are being taken to draw the attention of young officers, either at Woolwich or at Sandhurst, to the all-importance to them of making that further study of history which he has advocated. I am sorry for it. The reason of it is that there is a sound opinion that study should be very thorough at those schools, and therefore they are very anxious to limit the number of subjects. That is a very proper feeling, but, on the other hand, it does seem to me that candidates, both at Woolwich and at Sandhurst, ought to be made to feel that under no circumstances can their instruction be more than opening the door to them to what they must themselves enter upon afterwards. The subject of war in its larger aspects does really interest them very much indeed if it is properly put before them; and if they are made to feel that all that can be done for them is to show them how much there is to learn and how much good it will be to them to learn it, a very great service is done to them in their start in life. Therefore, I think we owe a very sincere vote of thanks, which I am sure I may offer from you, to Colonel Henderson, for having drawn attention to a most important subject, and a most valuable one.