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"On the Education of Staff Officers."

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LECTURE.

Friday, April 29th, 1870.

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM J. CODRINGTON, G.C.B., in the Chair.

“ON THE EDUCATION OF STAFF OFFICERS.”

By Major ALFRED S. JONES, *V.C.*, Adjutant, Staff College, Sandhurst.

BLUE books are not usually supposed to afford very attractive reading, but I confess that, when their subject is of interest, I always feel some satisfaction in wading through them, because of the assurance they convey that the very latest and best information has been collected for digestion by their readers.

While engaged in reading three such volumes, presented to Parliament about a month ago, by the Royal Commission on Military Education, I was invited by the Council of the Royal United Service Institution to prepare a lecture for delivery in this theatre, and it occurred to me that “the education of Staff Officers” might possibly prove to be a subject of interest to this meeting.

The education of Staff Officers was formerly left very much to chance, or to be picked up during active service in the field, which, if available, is undoubtedly the best of staff schools; but when the operations of war began to be carried on with greater rapidity and with larger bodies of troops, the need of some previous knowledge on the part of Generals and Staff Officers was felt to be most urgent. War became more the subject of scientific study under such commanders and writers as the Archduke Charles, Jonimi, and Napoleon; but I cannot ascertain that any attempt was made to form a staff school until England set the example with her Senior Department, which was soon copied by most of the continental nations.

If we think over the great variety and vast importance of the duties which fall to the lot of the General Staff with an Army in the field, we must be lost in wonder that such duties are ever properly fulfilled, and, granting that a Staff Officer, like a poet, should be “to the manner born,” we should surely spare no pains with his education, in order that native talent may be developed to its utmost limit.

The following translation from a French writer gives an admirable epitome of life on the staff in campaign, and though its language may seem somewhat high-flown, any one who has experienced the delightful sensation of responsibility involved in helping to carry out his General's plans, will pardon the high colouring of such a passage even when it appears in its English dress.

After describing the employment of infantry, cavalry, and artillery in action, the writer proceeds as follows:—

"What are the duties of the Staff Officer? his hands, it is true, are void of trophies, his lips are not blackened by gunpowder, and the sword which hangs at his side has rested in its scabbard perhaps all through the action; but he has been seen at daybreak among the skirmishers engaged in drawing a rapid sketch of the enemy's position.

"He has been observed guiding the columns of attack through storms of shot, and clouds of smoke upon points indicated by his General for their onset. He has been seen sitting motionless on his horse to serve, at once, as a point of formation for the line of battle, and as a target for the enemy's fire. He has re-appeared after charges of cavalry, he has placed an ambush, he has led the way on that *détour* by which the retreat of a vanquished enemy has been cut off.

"In the camp at nightfall silence succeeds the tumult, fatigue and darkness have stopped the work of destruction, and the troops are reposing after their exertions.

"Physical force is asleep, but thought still watches; the General and his Staff are at work, counting the losses of the day, and preparing resources for the morrow; here a Staff Officer records feats of arms, and the names of those who will be proclaimed as heroes; there, another traces a map which will prove interesting to the future historian; a third combines numerous details into the general orders of the day; while a fourth sets out to communicate, *à voix*, the most secret instructions, or to make enquiries on the part of his General at the hospital, the magazine, or the stores.

"Before daylight you may distinguish, by the glare of expiring bivouac fires, an Officer starting with a few mounted followers. He is a Staff Officer going to search for a defile through the mountains, to sound the fords of a river, or to explore the depths of the forest; such an one will go through great danger without *éclat*, and will make gigantic efforts unseen by any spectator, his success and his brave deeds will be recorded by no historian.

"Staff Officers receive in gross the orders of their Commander, and disseminate them to the Army. By their eyes the General sees the country and recognizes the resources and obstacles of the ground; by their reports his genius observes, studies, and divines the enemy's intentions; and when the decisive day arrives, he launches forth without scruple, their young heads imbued with his own will and plans, into the thickest of the combat, whither the highest interest of the Army and the State forbid him to penetrate in person. Such in brief are the functions of Staff Officers in all European Armies."

All this applied to staff duties in the wars of Napoleon, and while no single particular of these functions has been *simplified*, their whole character has been immensely *complicated* by the introduction of railways and electric telegraphs into the theatres of all modern wars.

The report of the Royal Commission on Military Education justly remarks, that the Staff College is not so popular in the Army as it might be, and I have thought that this may be attributed, partly, to a want of familiarity with the constitution of the College, which is prevalent in most regiments, and partly to a restless competitive spirit which, during the last ten years has been instilled into the students, and which some of them have carried on to their staff appointments, or back into their regiments, to excite the criticism of their brother Officers by a, perhaps unconscious, assumption of superior attainments.

Very striking improvements are about to be made in the course of study pursued at the Staff College; and I shall be only too happy if in this lecture I can dissipate a prejudice, or induce any of the members of this Institution to turn their attention to the College, because our grand deficiency arises from backwardness of the best *regimental* Officers to compete for entrance, and I feel sure that many such are to be found among the readers of the "Journal" of the Royal United Service Institution.

I say the best *regimental* Officers, because there is no point upon which I am more fully convinced, than that you can never make an indifferent regimental Officer into even a passably good Staff Officer by any amount, or description, of education which can possibly be devised.

It is very probable that a bad regimental Officer may pass through the meshes of the examination net, and unless the Commandant of the Staff College, or some other authority, can be induced to exercise most firmly the power of weeding out candidates who come up for the entrance examination, the chances will always be in favour of some book-worms, or men who have mistaken their vocation, surviving to bring discredit upon an institution which professes to educate for the staff.

It should be remembered that one black sheep who has passed through such a school brings more reproach upon the tests which failed to check his career than can be wiped out by ten angels of light who may have been his comrades at the College.

It must be noted, also, that we have had no great war to bring out the resources of Staff College men, and that it is rather hard to judge by their performances as Brigade Majors in peace, because the special duties of such appointments can, most unquestionably, be learnt with greater facility by an Adjutant, at his regimental parade and orderly room, than by any number of years' study at a Staff College.

We will now begin with a short sketch of the history of staff education in this country from the first establishment of the Senior Department at High Wycombe in 1799, up to the present date; we will glance at the course of study now pursued at the Staff College, and the life of the students, giving suggestions as to the

best means of preparation for the entrance examination; and conclude with some general remarks on the character and qualifications of a good Staff Officer, and with a proposition for extending and completing the education, which I can regard as commenced *only* by the College course.

The lack of educated Staff Officers was felt by the authorities engaged in fitting out the expedition for Holland during the last year of the eighteenth century, and General Le Marchant, with the assistance of General Jarry, a French Officer, who had served with Frederick II., availed himself of this opportunity to establish a staff school just before the Duke of York sailed to take command of that disastrous expedition.

I cannot do better than quote the evidence of the renowned Sir Howard Douglas, who thus describes the foundation of the Senior Department:—

"General Jarry, who was the first Commandant of the Senior Department, was a Frenchman, highly educated in France, who entered the service of Prussia a short time before the commencement of the seven years' war, and was on the personal Staff of Frederick II. through the whole of that war. He returned to France, and became afterwards one of the Generals of the French Army; and in the year 1795 defected from the French Army and came to London, where he soon became very generally known as a man of eminent talent, perfectly master of the science and practice of his profession; and from his having served so long upon the staff and about the person of Frederick II., full of the most interesting anecdotes and instructive details connected with that war.

"General Le Marchant having formed an acquaintance with General Jarry in London; it occurred to him that if General Jarry could be engaged to give lectures to a certain number of young Officers who might be disposed to go and reside where the General might attend, it would be very advantageous to the service.

"General Jarry was so engaged. A house was taken at High Wycombe, a considerable number of the rising young Officers of the day became his students: Sir George Murray, Sir Henry Bunbury, Sir Richard Bourke, General Richardson, and a great many others.

"General Jarry soon found that the rudiments of military science in the British Army were not sufficiently known to enable the students to profit by his instruction, and recommended that mathematical, fortification, and other classes, should be established; and accordingly, Mr. Dalby, a mathematical professor, M. Denis, a professor of fortification, and M. Polchet, of the Polytechnic School, were engaged, and in this way the Senior Department was established."

The distinguished General (Sir Howard Douglas), whose words I have just quoted, was himself appointed in 1804 to assist General Jarry as Superintendent of the Senior Department, which then contained thirty students.

The records kept at Sandhurst show that, from the year 1799 up to the end of the continental war in 1815, no less than 290 Officers

availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them of learning "the scientific parts of their profession, with a view to the better discharge of their duty when acting in command of regiments, the situation (says the Royal Warrant of 1808) in which they can best recommend themselves to Us, and be entitled to hope for advancement in the higher stations of Our service, and at the same time of qualifying themselves for employment in the Quartermaster-General's, and Adjutant-General's Departments."

Out of these 290 Officers, 172 are known to have served on the Staff in the Peninsula, America, or at Waterloo, and the following are a few of the most distinguished names among their number:—

Lieutenant-General D'Urban, afterwards Governor and Commander-in-Chief at the Cape of Good Hope.

Field-Marshal Sir William Gomm, late Commander-in-Chief in India,

Field-Marshal Lord Hardinge, late Commander-in-Chief.

General Sir George Scovell, G.C.B.

General Sir Duncan Macgregor, K.C.B.

General Sir James Hope, G.C.B.

General Sir George Brown.

Generals Sir Charles and Sir William Napier.

General Simpson, Commander-in-Chief in the Crimea.

General the Hon. Sir Edward Cust, K.C.H.

Many of these 290 Officers were obliged to embark with their regiments before they had been many months at the College, and some of these returned once or twice at intervals to resume their studies. When it is added that 81, or 27·9 per cent. of the whole, are recorded as killed or wounded, enough has, I think, been said to prove that the late Senior Department must have had weight in determining our national success in the great war.

Our enemies, at any rate, who had ample opportunities of forming a correct judgment, were so impressed with the sense of the great efficiency of the staff which served under the Duke of Wellington, that the famous M. Dupin was despatched to England as soon as peace was concluded to visit and report upon the Senior Department. He remained some time with the enthusiastic Sir Howard Douglas, who had contributed so much to the early success of that institution, caught his spirit, and returned with M. Denis, who was then entitled to a pension from the English Government, to establish, in 1818, the Staff School, which still flourishes in Paris.

In the year 1820 the peace reductions led to the removal of the Senior Department from Farnham, whither it had migrated from High Wycombe in 1812, to its final resting place at Sandhurst, where the Junior Department had been established for some years.

The number of students was, at the same time, cut down from thirty to fifteen, and the establishment of professors from five to two.

We now come to the dark ages in the history of education for the Staff, because the routine duties of home and colonial staff-employment in profound peace, did not demand more education, or ability, than could be supplied by the appointment of any Officers who happened to possess more interest than their neighbours.

There was, therefore, little encouragement for students to incur the

expense* of residence at Sandhurst, except what they could derive from a consciousness of exertion in the path of improvement in their professional acquirements.

Most fortunately, however, one of the two professors appointed on the reduced establishment in 1820, was a host in himself.

Mr. Narrien, to whom I allude, undertook the instruction of mathematics, fortification, and military science; in fact of all the subjects, except surveying and the French language, which were then considered necessary for a Staff Officer's education.

Mr. Narrien remained Chief Professor until 1857, and numerous Officers, who benefited by his instruction, bear witness to his high qualifications, and to the untiring patience and zeal with which he endeavoured to lead them on in their studies.

The mere mention of a few names, gleaned from the roll of students in order of time from 1815 downwards, will, I think, serve to show that the men who were destined to make their mark upon the Service, and to hand down their names as household words to the English public, still resorted to the Senior Department for professional instruction:—

Lieutenant-General Sir George Wetherall, K.C.B.

„ W. F. Forster, K.H., Military Secretary.

„ Sir Thomas Reed, K.C.B.

„ Sir Richard Airey, G.C.B., Commander-in-Chief; and Governor of Gibraltar.

„ J. K. Johnston.

„ M. C. Johnstone.

„ W. A. M'Cleverty, Commander-in-Chief, Madras.

„ The Hon. Sir J. Yorke Scarlett, G.C.B., Commanding the Division at Aldershot.

„ Sir D. A. Cameron, K.C.B.

„ Sir John Michel, K.C.B.

„ W. N. Hutchinson.

„ Sir R. Percy Douglas, Baronet, late Commander of the Forces, and Lieutenant-Governor, Cape of Good Hope,

and last, though not least, Sir George Grey, K.C.B., who, after studying, as a Lieutenant of the 83rd Regiment, at the Senior Department, turned to civil life and became celebrated as Governor of New Zealand and of the Cape of Good Hope.

The Crimean War, with its *Times'* correspondent, and numerous motions and questions in Parliament during the session of 1855, brought about quite a "revival movement."

A Commission (consisting of Colonel Yolland, R.E., Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. Smythe, R.A., and the Rev. W. C. Lake, M.A.) was appointed to visit and report upon the military schools of continental nations, as well as those at home; and, among the former, the Staff School which had been formed at Paris, on the model of our Senior Department, served, singularly enough, as the basis for the Commission's main recommendations for the reformation of its prototype at Sandhurst.

* Students of the Senior Department had to pay £30 to the College Funds.

It appears from the Report of these Commissioners, that they found the principle of individual competition greatly relied upon in the French, Austrian, and Sardinian Staff Schools, and that it also existed in a modified degree in the Prussian War Academy at the period of their visit.

They were most strongly impressed with this idea of competition, which was very popular in England, and it became, in fact, the dominant spirit of their Report, as it appears in the following language:—

"The contrast (to our own Senior Department) presented by all foreign Staff schools is certainly striking. There are differences, indeed, between these schools in France and Austria as to the period of admission and other points. But both are alike in *this*, that they are so framed as to give every conceivable premium and encouragement to such military acquirements, as the service of this Staff is thought to require.

"In both the Officers enter by competition, and after a laborious course obtain their appointments on the Staff as the reward of their distinctions in the school. It seems needless to urge, that a college of this kind, opening the door to advancement, and frequented when the mind is in full vigour, would possess every inducement to call forth the energies of young Officers of talent. But a Senior Department offering a bare opportunity for military study with no ulterior results, stands in a wholly different position."

This ruling idea of competition was strikingly confirmed by a resolution passed in the House of Commons on the 28th July, 1857, on the motion of Sir De Lacy Evans:—

"That in the opinion of this House, a higher standard of professional instruction and more complete provision for it, than hitherto deemed requisite, ought to be established for the commissioned ranks of the Army, but especially for the Staff. That this will be best promoted by recourse to competitive examination of Officers desiring to qualify themselves for the Staff, and by approved encouragement for proficiency and general fitness for advancement."

The Purchase Commission also reported in very much the same strain, and the Council of Military Education organized about this time, set to work to carry out what they called the system of pure competition—not only for entrance to the Staff College, but—at all stages of residence therein.

I was myself among the earliest students, and have attentively watched the progress of the competitive system to the present time.

At first, marks were assigned during the two years' residence, *only* to certain surveys, plates, and memoirs, and the great competitive struggle was left for the final examination on quitting the College.

But latterly the system has been complicated by the introduction of many provisoes allowing marks to be made at all sorts of periods in the course, so that it became possible for a student to have collected enough marks to secure success before entering at all upon the final examination. Thus knowing that their names would be published in order of merit, determined by the aggregate number of marks to be amassed during their residence, the students were continually fretted and ha-

passed by anxiety, which—varied of course according to natural temperament,—but was, in some cases the cause of illness, and often made life a burden during the whole two years' residence.

The worst effect of the system was, the temptation held out to the newly-joined student to choose his voluntary subjects with reference rather to profit in the currency of marks, than to his natural bias, talents, or deficiencies. The system became so complicated, that one often heard the observation, "Oh! if I had understood the marks better at first, I would have taken up such or such a subject, but I did not find it out in time."

To these regulations for marks, there was added a stipulation that each student must attend two-thirds of the Professor's studies in each voluntary subject during the month, besides all obligatory ones; and therefore, in addition to his account of marks, each student had to keep a score of his attendances, and make up deficiencies by going to Professors, whose instruction he did not require, simply to avoid being found fault with at the end of the month. Latterly, however, this rule was modified, and required two-thirds of the *aggregate* of voluntary studies instead of two-thirds in *each* subject; but it was still felt as very oppressive.

A competitive examination is, perhaps, indispensable as the *entrance* test, but after eleven years of trial, the extension of competition *beyond that point* has been condemned by the Royal Commission, upon an extraordinary weight of evidence given against it with remarkable unanimity, by nearly all the witnesses who have been examined. Indeed, we are now retracing our steps, and shall, I trust, re-establish all that was best in the system of the Senior Department, in its palmiest days.

The Commissioners of 1856, who found that the Senior Department had almost died out under the cold shade of 40 years' peace, seem to have been hasty in rushing to the conclusion that the usefulness of that institution could be revived only by substituting a slavish copy of its Paris offshoot. They appear to have overlooked the fact that the Staff Students at Paris are youths who have not yet joined a regiment, and that the competition in book learning, which may be harmless and useful for comparative schoolboys, may be prejudicial among British Officers brought together, *after from five to twenty years' service* in different regiments.* It is to the reluctance of many of our best regimental Officers to enter for a two years' race on such terms, that I attribute some of the unpopularity of the Staff College.

In confirmation of the present Royal Commission's decision against individual competition, may be cited the following observations of Professor Seeley, upon a similar system carried to extremes at the University of Cambridge:—

"It will be admitted that teaching boys is very different from teach-

* One of the Commissioners, viz., Lieut.-Colonel Smythe, R.A., signed the Report under the following reservation:—"For the history and description of the Foreign Military Schools *only*," so we must regard the Colonel of Engineers and the Clergyman as solely responsible for the conclusions and recommendations of their joint Report, dated 12th January, 1857.

"ing men. We find that the boy requires to be constantly supplied with motives for working, while the man brings these with him. And though it may be useful to classify men, yet, as soon as the classification pretends to be exact, it becomes delusive. Who is the better for learning, that of two good men, one is slightly better than the other? To act upon this—to give, for example, an appointment to the man who was fourth, rather than to the man who was eighth, is, I am sure, a folly; and to many such follies and injustices does this system of placing men practically lead.

"Meanwhile, the state of mind which is produced in the student by perpetual competition is far from wholesome. Instead of enlarging the range of the student's anticipations, competition narrows them. It makes him careless of his future life, regardless of his higher interests, and concentrates all his thoughts on the paltry examination, on which, perhaps, a fellowship depends. The process of reasoning which goes on in the student's mind, and which you may hear avowed in his conversation, is this, 'I know what I should like to be doing; I know what seems to my mind good; I know what I shall study as soon as I am at liberty, if my taste for study lives so long. But at the same time, I know what will procure me marks, and it is my business now to narrow my mind, and for three years to consider, not what is true, but what will be set in the examination.'"

Professor Seeley concludes his attack upon the competitive system with these words:—

"I would deliver education from its dependence, and, without renouncing the undeniable advantages of strict and well-conducted examinations, I would use them, as little as possible, as a motive or incentive to study. I would appeal directly to the student's love of knowledge. I would endeavour in all ways to kindle it, but especially by improving the quality of the teaching, and even if the result were some diminution of industry, I should find full consolation in the improvement of tone."

I must just add a few lines from a recent account of the Prussian Staff School, to show that the absence of competition is not *there* considered to have proved unfavourable to industry. The present Director of the War Academy at Berlin, which answers to our Staff College, has thus expressed himself:—"Whatever advantages a system of competition might be supposed to possess in the case of *junior* schools, it would be entirely unsuited to such an establishment as the War Academy. The absence of competition is certainly not considered to be unfavourable to industry; there is no complaint of idleness."

The General Order issued from the Horse Guards on the 14th instant, has definitely endorsed the decision of the Royal Commission, by ruling that the successful candidates at the final examination shall be arranged in order of *seniority of their regiments*, in two classes, namely,—

1st class "honours,"

2nd class "pass,"

instead of as hitherto in so-called order of individual merit. And I have every reason to hope that these classes will be formed in each of

the obligatory subjects rather than by the aggregate of marks gained in those subjects all added together.

The students will henceforth have much greater freedom of study under the condition of satisfying the Commandant that they are making due progress in the obligatory subjects, and otherwise taking advantage of the means of education provided by the State. We have hitherto failed, I think, to bring forward this obligation in a sufficiently strong light, but I trust that future Commandants, freed from the trammels of the mark system, and responsible solely to the Director-General of Military Education, will feel it a burden upon their consciences to supervise the distribution of this State-paid education with as much regard to probability of return to the State for seed thrown into good ground, as if they were cultivating a farm. In such a case they would not allow seed to be wasted on untilled land, and it would seem equally culpable to permit a student to remain at the Staff College without reasonable anticipation that he would become a better Officer for every month of his residence therein.

It must be remembered that, after all is said and done about the system of a Staff College, its success must depend *mainly* upon the earnest and enthusiastic character of the Commandant, who ought to diffuse life and energy through the ranks of professors and students.

The selection of a military Arnold for this post is indeed a matter of great difficulty for the authorities, and we, who are interested in the fate of the Staff College and its future influence on the Army, may well look forward with great anxiety to the result of their decision.

The introduction of a regulation reserving the Staff appointments of the Army, with some exceptions, for men who have passed the Staff College, has, I think, had an unfortunate effect in raising a sort of half-recognised claim, which has made students feel dissatisfied at not receiving appointments immediately after passing their final examination. Every effort has been made by the authorities to satisfy these supposed claims, but the number of appointments is of course limited, and I am sorry to say that some students have quitted the service in despair of obtaining the reward to which they had looked forward. Just as the training of a steady charger for racing will often unfit him for future service in the ranks, so two years' competition at the Staff College has indisposed even good regimental Officers for the monotony of barrack life.

Having thus reviewed at great length the short reign of the competitive system, and the concomitant evils which have led to its abolition for the future, let us resume the history of the Senior Department, or Staff College, as it began to be called in the year 1858. The other changes introduced by the "revival movement" of that year have, with only slight modification, stood the test of time; and, excepting the higher course of mathematics, the Royal Commission have retained most of the course of study prescribed at the date of their Report.

Professors of military topography, fortification, military history, military administration, and of the French, German, and Hindustani languages, were engaged in 1858, and a Commandant and Adjutant appointed.

A large and convenient building was erected on a good site, in the Royal Military College estate, and opened in the summer of 1862; but the discipline and educational arrangements were still suffered to remain under the superintendence of the Governor of the Royal Military College.

All correspondence of the Horse Guards and Council of Military Education had thus to pass through another channel on its way to and from the Commandant of the Staff College, who is not yet allowed to give even two days' leave to a student without the approval of the Governor of the Royal Military College.

The Report of the Royal Commission has recommended the entire separation of the two Colleges, and has compressed the functions of the late Council of Military Education into one head, styled the Director General of that Department.

Major-General William Napier, formerly Vice-President of the Council, has been appointed to that high office; but no steps have yet been taken to carry out the separation of the Colleges, and so to shorten the chain of responsibility, as recommended by the Report.

Without noticing minor changes which have been imported into the course of study during the last ten years, we will proceed to describe in general terms what is the system at present in force.

COURSE OF STUDY FOR TWO YEARS.

1st. *Out of doors*.—Surveying during the best weather of the first year; eye sketching without instruments; road making, and schemes for defence and attack of houses, villages, &c., during the third term; practical instruction in bridging, mining, siege works, &c.; reconnaissance in the last term of residence.

Riding has hitherto been taught by two lessons a week only throughout the course; but it is to be hoped that, at the recommendation of the Royal Commission, more frequent attendance may be given at the riding school, and thus future students may be enabled to dispose of this branch of education during their first or second term.

2nd. *In doors*.—Military history; strategy and tactics; military administration and law; fortification and artillery, by lectures, and writing memoirs on these several subjects. Copying examples of ground-drawing plans, sections, &c., of fortifications and siege works; geology, chemistry, photography, and telegraphy, by lectures, illustrated by experiments and specimens.

Reconnaissance is perhaps the most important in its bearing on staff service in the field of all the subjects taught at the Staff College, and it is undoubtedly considered the most interesting by the students.

A sum of £100 is allowed for travelling expenses during the month of September in each year, to enable the Senior Division of students to undertake one or more extensive reconnaissances at a distance from the College. This allowance is always made to go as far as possible, and I should be glad to hear of its being doubled in amount, for its present limit often interferes with the Commandant's freedom in laying his plans of campaign for the students on their annual expedition.

The usual reconnaissance course is arranged as follows :—

The Commandant, taking as his text a tract on "Military Reconnaissance," by General Napier, gives a lecture to the Officers of the senior division, explains the objects of reconnaissance, and the means of collecting the most useful information, and tells them what to observe, and how to record all that is of importance in a military sense, regarding the country to be reconnoitred.

The students are provided with blank forms of road-reports, and are instructed how to fill in their several columns systematically, and to give their report in the most concise terms.

Orders are then issued upon supposed data as to base, lines of operations, objective, position of the enemy, forces on both sides, &c., and the work of reconnaissance is told off in distinct sections to the senior division, assorted into parties of from three to five Officers.

Each party has to make a joint sketch and full report upon the section of the reconnaissance which has fallen to its lot, and the whole work is delivered to the Commandant by a stated time.

After examining the work thus sent in, the Commandant delivers another lecture, pointing out errors and omissions, and giving his comments on the reconnaissance generally.

The hours of study throughout the course are from 9½ A.M. to 4½ P.M., with an interval of half-an-hour for lunch; but it is by no means necessary that students should be employed in halls of study during all the hours thus disposed of in the time table, which is prepared with a view to giving all reasonable facilities of access to professors by ensuring their presence at the times indicated.

The Officers' quarters are comfortable and the mess is conducted on the principles of a regimental one, so that the expense of living is much the same as with infantry regiments on home service.

There is no lack of amusements and society for all who like it. Cricket, racquets, and boating, and the Cadets' gymnasium may be resorted to by those who are disposed for exercise to any amount desired.

Mr. Garth's pack of foxhounds is within easy reach on three days a week, and latterly a pack of drag hounds has been kept by the students, who often find that the *certainly* of a gallop with the latter in the afternoon, and near home, is preferable to giving up the whole day to hunting with foxhounds.

Few, except Mr. Freeman, will deny that hunting is one of the most useful exercises for a Staff Officer, as it gives a tone to his physique and cultivates an eye for country, and horsemanship, all of which are likely to be most useful in his future career.

Forage for one horse is allowed to any student who will mount himself, and it seems most desirable to encourage keeping horses as much as possible.

Life at the Staff College is certainly most agreeable to any one who can make up his mind to give a very reasonable amount of application to study, and I can safely say that I have known few who do not look back with pleasure upon the two years they have passed as students.

Those few exceptions have been men of an anxious competitive

frame of mind, whose sole absorbing interest was centred in marks;—they lived in constant anxiety lest they should be passed in the race by some other student, who had been placed below them in the entrance competition,—or they were devoured by the ambition of passing out in a higher place than the one they had taken at first.

My object in this lecture has been solely to place before the readers of the Journal of this Institution, a general view of the subject of Staff Education, for I have thought that some, who might not think it worth their while to study the General Orders, might cast an eye over these pages, and be thereby incited to enquire further into the system of the Staff College. If any young officer of promise should be so incited, and find the way to distinguish himself and the Staff College in future years, I shall deem myself most fortunate in having attracted his attention to the subject.

It is generally supposed that in order to have a good chance of success at the entrance examination, it is necessary to resort to the assistance of a "crammer;" but I really believe that many who thus fancy that they have found a royal road to learning, are, on the contrary, expending time and money to little real advantage.

The General Order (No. 41 of this year's series specially issued from the Horse Guards on the 14th instant) gives full details, and the reports of previous examinations for entrance published by Taylor and Francis, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, afford candidates ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the kind of questions to be expected from the several examiners.

The Military History should be got up by an attentive study of Colonel Hamley's "Operations of War," Colonel Macdougall's "Modern Warfare," "Straith's Strategy," and Lavallée's "Military Topography," with any works the candidate can collect upon the special campaigns selected for each year's examination and published in General Orders.

In Fortification, perhaps the most useful work a candidate could study, is one on "Field and Permanent Fortification," by Captain Philips, R.E., published by Benjamin Pardon, Paternoster Row.

For Military Drawing it may be desirable to seek a few hints from any friend who has learnt that art, and in future the Garrison Instructors, who are about to be appointed at all large stations, will supply any assistance a candidate can require. I have gone into these details because I have been occasionally asked for information as to the best books which a candidate can read with a view to the entrance examination, and I am most anxious to put on record my firm belief that any Officer of average abilities *can prepare himself* for the entrance examination with very slight exertion, and without quitting his regiment.

It is evident that the success and popularity of the Staff College must depend very much on the character of men admitted, for no education can possibly change the idiosyncracies of men of mature age; and the attention of the Royal Commission was early directed to the failure of free competition to select the best men, as it was expected to have done by the enthusiasts of 1857. I say free competition,

because it is well known that the printed certificate formerly required was signed as a matter of form by most candidates' Commanding Officers, and that it afforded no guarantee whatever of their fitness for the Staff.

The revised General Order just issued, provides a triple check, by requiring a certificate from the Commanding Officer that the candidate is in every respect a thoroughly good regimental Officer; a confidential report from a board of the three Senior Officers of the candidate's regiment in answer to specific questions regarding his character, habits, disposition, and general qualifications for employment on the Staff; and, when practicable, a confidential report from a General Officer to whose brigade or division the candidate should have been attached as an Acting Staff Officer for a month previous to the examination. This change may, I hope be found useful, but I confess that I look for the real security against inefficient students, rather to the power of removal from the College at any period of the course freely conceded to the Commandant. That officer should have the highest interest in the credit of the Institution, and as, during the two years' course, he will have excellent opportunities of observing the characters of the students, he should be held responsible that no inefficient Officer be allowed to reach the final examination.

There is one other point, or rather there are two changes pointing in the same direction, which may I hope extinguish the class of Staff College Officers whom his Royal Highness the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief very justly styled "grumblers" in his evidence before the Royal Commission.

These changes are, the increase of the number of students from 30 to 40; and the suppression of the regulation above referred to, which seemed to create a *claim* to Staff appointments.

The first of these changes must operate in forcing the conviction upon the minds of students, that a minority *only* can ever receive Staff appointments in Peace; and the other will cut away the ground upon which they were wont to build *what* they called *claims*.

These "grumblers" who come to the Staff College for the loaves and fishes of Peace appointments, are not the men to make the Staff College popular in the service, and we want more of that spirit referred to in the warrant of 1808, which has a view "to the better discharge of *duty when acting in command of regiments, the situation in which officers can best recommend themselves to Us,*" &c.

The well-intentioned action of the Reformers in 1858 was the result, no doubt, of a belief that the Officers of our Army required a powerful motive to educate themselves for the Staff, and they sought to supply this by throwing open the prizes of five years' Staff appointments to the best in book-learning, because it was easier to establish a test for *that* than for any other branch of Staff education. But in these days the offer of a free education is by no means despised; and now that the bugbear of competition, and the exaggerated stories of hard reading gone through at the Staff College, have been dissipated, I believe that no such motive is wanted.

It should be recollected that, in all other professions, men pay for

their learning, and, consequently, a perfectly free education, with full pay and no duty, is no *small* boon to any Officer ambitious of future success in his profession; he may have to wait, it is true, many years for the war which can alone afford opportunity for making use of his knowledge, but does not the surgeon wait weary years for his patients, and the lawyer for his briefs? yet the State provides neither education nor maintenance for these gentlemen.

Common sense, zeal tempered with discretion, tact, gentlemanly bearing, good temper, quickness of perception, power of condensing and expressing orders with brevity, clearness, and decision, an eye for ground, and ability to ride well, both in the school and across country;—all these, joined to a robust constitution, are indispensable characteristics of a good Staff Officer, but three only, out of the ten above enumerated, can be much improved at the Staff College, and two of those three, viz., riding, and compiling orders, have hitherto failed to receive the attention they deserve. The education obtained at the Staff College is specially calculated to fit an Officer who naturally possesses the ten qualifications, to make use of them to the utmost in *war*, and it seems hardly fair to put such an institution on its trial in time of *peace*, even if its machinery had been set to work exclusively upon raw material possessing the above natural qualities in the highest degree. The actual conditions of trial during the last twelve years have been still more unfavourable to the College, for it has been supplied with raw material, selected without regard to its possession, or not, of any one of the ten requisites, and the machinery has been checked by friction from the competitive system, and other minor evils, which are now abolished.

We are, I trust, entering upon a new era of prosperity for the Staff College, which has borne the searching investigation of a Royal Commission so satisfactorily, that it has been found expedient to increase the number of students to 40; while the changes just being introduced will, I am convinced, make the place more popular so soon as they are widely known.

I look forward to a future war as our only real test of the advantage of a scientific education for the Staff, and when that trial arrives, the Staff College of the period will, no doubt, work its way to the front as conspicuously as did the late Senior Department in the Peninsular war.

War is the soldier's real work, and it should never be forgotten that all peace service is but a preparation for the former. With this view, therefore, in conclusion, I beg, with all due deference, to offer for the consideration of the authorities, a suggestion that the tenure of appointments generally, or at least of the *junior ones*, at *camps of instruction*, should be reduced to one or at most two years.*

A move of this kind would give rise to a circulation between Staff

* I hope it may be distinctly understood, that I would make no objection to the occasional re-appointment of men who had proved themselves really efficient Staff Officers during their one or two years' trial. What I wish to see abolished is, the sort of "tenant right," introduced by the five years' rule, which practically gives fixity of tenure for that period to any one appointed to the Staff, however unfitted he may prove himself to be for such employment.

and Regimental Service, which would be eventually of great use in completing the education acquired at the Staff College, in breaking down prejudices of both Staff and Regimental Officers, and generally by infusing a more healthy tone throughout the Army.

The Military Secretary, in his evidence before the Royal Commission, very justly observed, with regard to anything like permanence in Staff appointments:—

"If a young Officer gets a Staff appointment of that sort which would be permanent, the first thing which he does is to marry, which is the very worst thing which can happen to a young Officer. He naturally begins to think of his family, and how to provide for them."

This is, indeed, too often the case with the five years' Staff appointments, and even with the two years' settled residence as student at the Staff College; and, while there is so much that can be learnt in one year's practice, as a Staff Officer at one of our large camps, which can never be taught at a Staff College, it seems a great pity not to establish such a circulation as I have suggested, which would remove much of the temptation to matrimony, and complete the education of a larger body of Officers than can, under present circumstances, hope for employment in time of peace.

Some additional trouble would, no doubt, accrue to the Generals and authorities concerned in appointments to the Staff, but this would be compensated by the future advantage of being able to lay their hands upon tried men in every regiment when the services of such are required on an emergency.

The only valid objection that occurs to me, lies in the outlay for Staff uniform and horses; but in these days of economy I do not see why so much gold lace should necessarily adhere to the Staff tunic, and horses might be supplied as they are at present to Officers of field batteries, without much additional expense to the public.

I fear that my proposal will not meet with much favour from those Officers who look upon Staff appointments as the prizes of the Service, to be sought and retained for the individual advantage of fortunate competitors. But I look upon the matter solely with a view to the general good of the Army; and believing that an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theoretical instruction, I should like to see the former distributed among as many Officers as possible during peace, in order that in war, we may have a large reserve of trained men to supply the sudden demand which must arise from an augmentation of the Regular Forces, the embodiment of the Militia, and organization of the Volunteers.