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The Italian Army

Colonel the Right Honourable Lord Wavenev A.D.C. to the Queen F.R.S.
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LECTURE.

Friday, May 12, 1876.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GARNET J. WOLSELEY, K.C.B., G.C.M.G.,
&c., &c., &c., in the Chair.

THE ITALIAN ARMY.

By Colonel the Right Honourable Lord WAVENEY, F.R.S., A.D.C.
to the Queen.

IN the address that I shall have the honour to give you this day, I am perfectly aware there exist very considerable difficulties, that the task is a very heavy one, but it is so intimately connected with the subject that closely engages our attention at present, namely, the re-organization of the Armies of Europe, and also is so conjoined with the fortunes of that great country, the Peninsula of Italy, over the progress of which we have watched with much anxiety, that even at the risk of giving a very incommensurate and insufficient idea of the circumstances which may be more plain to me in my imagination than I may be fortunate enough to make clear, I am still disposed to undertake the task. I had hoped, indeed, that on this occasion one of the old soldiers of the long series of successful and unwearyed struggles which I shall now have to relate to you might have been present. His Excellency the Italian Ambassador, had he not felt the paramount duty of attending the Court of Her Most Gracious Majesty, would have been present on this occasion, and thus I should have had the advantage of that enlightened and personal criticism which would have corrected the errors that I must needs, I fear, fall into.

The subject we treat this day is not one of the mere organization of the military force, but is so interwoven with the history of the country generally, with its improvement and defence, that you will permit me, I trust, to refer to some historical points before I proceed to the question of military organization. After the close of the Napoleonic struggle, one dead level of repose settled down upon Italy, made heavier and more grievous to her people by the political incapacities that restrained the exercise of constitutional rights. With the exception of one small State in which free action, both as regards the

people and as regards their government, was kept alive; with that exception, all the rest were held in a bondage the more hateful, that it was maintained by foreign bayonets. It is difficult to procure any map of Italy which sets forth very clearly the position which the small Duchy of Savoy, afterwards called the kingdom of Sardinia, occupied with regard to the rest of the Peninsula. But in the colours of that map you will see the proportion in the north-west corner which that kingdom occupied. So situated and so circumscribed, it is a matter of marvel that it should become at last the governing and motive power of Italy. As I have said, a repose which is not peace, rested upon Italy, until at last the dry bones began to move, and a new spirit was breathed into them. The proclamation of the Spanish Constitution at Naples, in 1822, gave the first evidence of reviving power and sentiment in any Italian country, too soon, unfortunately, to be quenched in defeat, for the progress of the Neapolitan Government was checked by the disastrous affair at Benevento, and then, for long years, there was no more speech of war. But the spirit was alive, and as time rolled on the Piedmontese Government more and more developed constitutional action, and began to prepare for the contest which it was seen was inevitable. I remember, in 1836, as I have mentioned before from this place, Field Marshal Radetzky prepared two alternative lines of defence in the valley of the Po. The attack was expected by him from the west, and from the west it came, but not in the shape which he anticipated. He believed that the French would exercise their newly developed power in attack, probably with the alliance of the Sardinian kingdom, but he little expected that Sardinia would confront Austria single-handed. We know the result of that bold and resolute movement—armies broken, the Sovereign an exile, and dying of a broken heart in Lisbon. But not, therefore, did the kingdom of Savoy abandon its true and noble confidence in the regeneration of Italy. Years passed on, and again the arbitrament of battle was appealed to by the sub-Alpine kingdom, and with a result which, as we know, gradually brought country after country into that mass of power which is now reigned over by Victor Emanuel, the King of united Italy. In the circumstances of those wars there were some curious and remarkable results. From the beginning the Sardinian kingdom had to rest exclusively on its own strength; the fighting power was gradually developed into a greater efficiency, step by step, as each successive government declared its adhesion, because this must be borne in mind, that no portion of Italy was conquered, so to speak, but that, being set free from the rule of its native government, it voluntarily joined itself to the Sardinian State. There were, besides, some conflicts fought single-handed—some disastrous—none dishonourable. There were battles fought in concert with the French Army, and in result of these, though falling short at the time of what might have been anticipated, though Italy was not conquered, as the French Emperor had promised, “from the Alps to the sea,” yet progress was attained; it was evident that some future day would give to Italy all that she could desire, just as previously the protracted resistance, made both at Rome and at

Venice, gave promise of what might be hereafter the lot of that country in a better day. And so at last Italy, with the exception of Rome, was won. "From the Alps to the sea," no foreign soldier rode or mounted guard on her soil, and the question then was, how, from the discordant materials of the Italian forces, a national Army could be constructed which should be sufficient to hold the country, first against invaders, and then against powers that might seek to enforce compromising alliances. Now, it will be observed that the different districts of Italy are separated from each other, not merely by natural bounds and limits, but also by the diverse genius and fashions of their people. The Northern Italy of Savoy has more of the feeling of the races beyond the Alps; the Lombard and the men of Venice are of one mode of thought, and those of the States of the Church and the Emilian Legations of another; and so of Tuscany, of Naples, and of Sicily, and the problem was, how to mould these into one homogeneous mass.

But, before I proceed further to show you how worthy the Sardinian Army was of the great task that lay before it, let me, from the simple records of its Army List, mention some facts which are well worthy of remembrance. Sardinia, or the new kingdom of the Savoy Duchy, has been known in the successful scientific wars of Europe since successful scientific wars began. We remember that the feuds and wars of the middle ages eminently brought to the surface the great Italian qualities of fiery courage, of resistance, of endurance, and of scientific application of mechanical means, so far as they were understood, in engineering and artillery, but it is not remembered, probably, that amongst the regimented forces of Europe few or none are older than the Italian. I find, in the Army List in which an account of the different regiments is given, that the third regiment, called that of Piedmont, dates from 1637. I believe that is older than any regimented corps in our country, and older, I think, than any borne on the rolls of France, or Austria, or Spain, or of any military power except that of Russia. These regiments distinguished themselves in many battles of the latter part of the 17th century and the whole of the 18th century. It is scarcely necessary for me to read to you the long roll of their distinctions, but those who remember the wars that have occurred in the last thirty years, and especially some to whom I now speak, who were companions of the small Sardinian Army by the waters of the Tchernaya, well know that they were soldiers, and have been soldiers at all times, with whom the English soldier might well be proud to bear privation and to mingle his blood. As of the infantry, so of the cavalry and so of the artillery and engineers. In this Army List you will find that gradually the Armies of the different countries that joined themselves to the sub-Alpine kingdom were absorbed and are borne on their rolls; but here was an enormous difficulty. Austria, with her repressive policy, had forbidden the youth of the Milanese, of Lombardy, and Venetia to cultivate their natural genius for arms and warlike science. The troops of Tuscany were trained on the Austrian system, but were comparatively small in number: the Neapolitan Army was trained and drilled

under the last King and his predecessors to an extent which gave them an admirable appearance under arms, and the thorough "*allure militaire*" which is so desirable; and yet, such was the fault of the Government, that this Army melted away before Garibaldi's red "camisade" as the snow before the sun, but has since re-entered in the persons of its Officers into the service of the King of Italy. I say in the persons of its Officers, because this is a point to which I shall direct attention. The men of the Italian Army undergo a more constant and searching change than those of any Army raised by conscription. How is this effected? In the administrative system of the Italian Government the principle is that a Minister of War shall lay what is called a "project of law," specifying whatever alterations he may desire to propose, first before the Chamber, and then before a Committee to be appointed by the Chamber. There is no examination of witnesses or appointing Committees in our sense, but the Committee, generally some sixteen or seventeen Deputies, examine the project themselves, and require such explanation from the Minister as may be necessary to satisfy themselves of the feasibility of his plans. These are very elaborate, and are carried out with a care and attention which is very remarkable. The volume before us comprehends the three projects of law on which the organization of the Army is now carried out, and it is exhaustive, as may be supposed, from the searching qualities of Italian genius. It goes into every question that can possibly concern the soldier, from the chief of the Army to the youngest recruit in the ranks; and some of the conclusions are exceedingly noteworthy, being drawn, not only from the personal experience of the Committee, but also from the incorporation of that which appears to be advantageous in the practice of foreign Armies. For instance, to commence with the main point of the recruiting, with regard to the exhaustive principle on which it should proceed, there was a very long series of discussions as to the nature of the service in the first instance, and that was decided to be personal conscription for every male subject in Italy, not disqualified by physical incapacities or exempted by certain family circumstances from service. Then came the question, what manner of Army there should be. And it was decided that there should be first an Army which could take the field, with a reserve, an Army answering to the *Landwehr* or the Militia of our country, and then a communal Militia, resembling the local corps which obtained in this country during the great French war; and, finally, Alpine corps, which are regarded as exclusively designed for the defence of the mountains. Then came the consideration as to whether there should be any exemption, or what provision should be made for those brought into the ranks. The principle is at present to raise the troops, 90,000 men, in what are called two categories. The first category consists of 65,000 men, who are raised according to proportions determined on a fixed system, throughout the military districts of the country; and this proportion joins the colours and remains with them, three years for the infantry and six for the cavalry; and the 25,000 remaining in the second category are taken to maintain the original strength of the Army in

line during the years of their service, that is to say, at the rate of about 10 per cent. And it is expressly laid down that those who happen to be placed in the second category, that is the category of temporary exemption, or deferred time of service, have no right, on that account, to be placed in the third category, that is to say, the Militia of the provinces or communal, but shall continue to form the second category. And I may mention this, in order to show how thoroughly a fair and true spirit pervades the whole of the Italian system. It was laid down expressly in the deliberations of this Committee, that there is only one hardship in forced service, and that is inequality.

Then with regard to the command of the Army. In the Italian service there is no permanent rank above that of Lieutenant-General. For the great commands, an officer styled "Army-General" is selected, equivalent to the temporary rank of General Commanding in Chief. And this question is also argued out with a greater closeness and at greater length than I care to detain you upon at present; but in this argument, and this shows you how thoroughly they have investigated every question, the Committee remark particularly upon the singular felicity with which H.R.H. the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief in this country has managed so to perform and carry forward our military institutions that he has made the armed soldier acceptable to his countrymen in a free state.

Then in this further analysis that I am speaking of, with the close prevision that is applied to all these subjects, I find in the distribution of an army of 100,000 men the proportion of infantry of the line to be 66,740, of bersaglieri 11,032, cavalry 4,849, field artillery 6,810, garrison artillery 4,086 pontoon train 572, engineers 2,179—a large proportion,—and transport 3,732. And the remark on the cavalry is this: that whereas cavalry is an arm difficult to maintain, and expensive also, and on these accounts to be adopted with much circumspection; that though certainly cavalry regiments may make a more brilliant campaign, yet for a country provided with sufficient fortifications, with an infantry it can trust, and with arms of defence, and with determination, as we say, to expend the last man and the last shilling, a brilliancy is not required which is in excess of what is necessary for the defence of the country.

The proportions of the conscription, of which I have spoken are somewhat remarkable. I have before me a table giving the estimated proportion of troops from 1872 to 1885. To avoid confusion, I have taken three periods—1872, 1878, and 1885. The annual contingent of 1872, permanent and in reserve, was 632,700 men; in 1878 it will be 736,700; and in 1885, 767,600. Under the first system, the troops were four years with the colours and twelve years liable to service; under the second system, which now prevails, they are three years with the colours and twelve years liable to service.

Having thus obtained their war numbers, the War Office proceeds to complete establishments with wonderful accuracy and minuteness. The artillery are to be provided with 1,000 field guns, of a description of which I shall have to speak, and with 800 steel B.L. field guns,

equivalent to our 16-pounders. The fortresses are adequately provided with artillery, and, as will appear further on, arrangements are made for the maintenance of the fortresses in an efficient state. I will now remark the care that has been taken with regard to the comfort of the soldier. The recruit is brought from hill or plain, as the case may be, but at all events, generally speaking in Italy, from secluded districts, at once into the Army, and is passed through the ranks. The system of military conscription is here carried out, I believe, to the most efficient and least hurtful extent in respect of the industry of the country. The principle is, that each Italian regiment shall have a certain proportion of recruits from different military districts, determined before-hand, that is, one-fifth from each of five different districts. Thus, though the soldier is not entirely separated from his friends and comrades of the district from which he was recruited, he is not only passed into a foreign garrison, so to speak, where he learns much of his countrymen that he has never known before, but he also learns it in the comradeship of those whom he thereby learns to respect and to appreciate. Thus, for instance, in recruiting for the infantry, I take the case of one particular corps; the first infantry regiment receives its recruits from five districts, from Alessandria, from Bergamo, from Sienna, from Naples, and from Palermo. I shall have, further on, to mention the circumstances under which these recruits are personally brought into the service.

I might detain you for some time on the general subject of establishments, but the work which has been published by our Topographical Department, "The Armed Strength of Italy," translated from the German by Lieutenant Hare, R.E., gives so clear an account, that I would refer you to its pages. There the general arrangements appeared to be very much as they are now carried out, though from time to time there must be, of course, considerable alterations. Permit me, then, for a moment, in the absence of detail, which time does not permit me to give, to ask credit for the military establishments being complete. I shall shortly proceed to give you some details as to some of the special establishments, but we are now arrived at the point that we have an army, we have the principle of appointing Officers, and the mode in which the soldier is brought into the ranks. When the soldier is in the ranks the question is, how he is dealt with. He is kept for three years nominally in the infantry, but for two years and eight months practically with the colours; he is then returned to his district, and is not allowed to remain, except under special circumstances and as a volunteer. It will be asked how are the non-commissioned officers to be obtained? Non-commissioned officers are obtained for the permanent service from battalions of instruction, which are organised very highly for their instruction on a uniform system; and amongst other points of interest to the Army, the question of how the non-commissioned officer is to be retained in the ranks is very minutely discussed. How to retain non-commissioned officers in the service is the question, and the answer is double, first in the negative and then in the positive direction. It appears that the hope or expectation of wearing the epaulette as commissioned Officers, will not retain the non-

commissioned officer in the service. For this reasons may be easily supposed. Then with regard to re-engagement, that does not appear to have been very successful, since if continued service does not decisively secure the future, no one will choose to expend in the service of the State the best years of his life, that is, those years which alone can create a sufficient provision for after-life.

But there are two special recommendations, one to recognise the right to employment, both staff and civil for long service; and the second is, and this a very remarkable one, and as far as I know novel, to create an intermediate grade between the Italian non-commissioned officer and the commissioned Officer. The Italians believe that these provisions will succeed very well, and this is one of the points on which we should have derived so much advantage from the opinion of the distinguished General, had he been present. I mention these things to show you the care and attention which are paid to regimental and other matters. Now I will take the case of the various duties and points of interest which come under the notice of the committees on military matters. Of the recruiting I have spoken. Then before these committees such matters are discussed as extraordinary expenses for the defence of the country, for the organization and *matériel* of artillery, for heavy field guns, for firelocks, for mobilisation of the Army, and for the defence of the sea-coasts. Another matter that has very much occupied the attention of the Italian Government in these references, has been the position of the Topographical Corps in the Italian Army. And this is remarkable; the Italian staff has been but twelve years in Sicily, and in that twelve years, with no very great amount of help, a map has been completed of contours, in beauty of execution in no way inferior to any that I have seen. In the report of this department a highly important scientific question is discussed, which I recommend to your notice, and which no doubt has attracted the attention of our Survey department. The question is not only the scale on which military plans should be drawn, but whether every section of a military map should be a precise portion of the great system comprehending the kingdom, or whatever other district may be selected, just as it is in actual fact on the ground. And here discussion arises as to the variable and comparative difficulty of forming such maps as shall be absolutely and positively true in reference to all points, if they be countries running north or south, or east or west. All scientific Officers present will at once see the difficulty arising from the different parallels, and this is what the Italian topographical staff have addressed themselves to obviate. The system adopted is called the polycentric system; that is to say, each separate sheet, instead of having an assumed uniform reference at all points to all other sheets, is taken in reference to the particular selected district, so that the whole of this district, though it does not absolutely and perfectly correspond with the entire surface of the larger and outer districts, is complete in itself, and one centre of proportional reference is taken in each sheet or district, and is therefore called the polycentric system, which now attains, I believe, most successful results in Italy.

Before I pass on, let me speak of the purpose for which alone this

Army is intended, and that is, of national defence. There is a proverb now, derived from one of these reports, which says "*L'esercito che ha fatto l'Italia fara anche gli Italiani.*" The Army which has made Italy a State is making the Italians step by step, in bringing all classes of men of all her provinces together, to honour and respect each other, through mutual knowledge, and is prepared especially in the person of its officers for sacrifices of any extent, for the advancement and for the defence of their country, as appeared in these reports.

With regard to the purposes of defence, there may be said to be five classes of war in Italy—the war of the Alps, the war of the Apennines, the war of the river system, the war of the coasts, and the war of fortresses. For the war of the Alps, the passes are being strongly fortified with small forts and heavy guns, and garrisoned by the Alpine corps. For the war of the Apennines the light field guns are designed, because, as the Italian Minister of War said to me, "What could we do in our mountains with your great and heavy artillery?" For the war of the plains, there are troops fitted for close battles. For the war of the fortresses, there are the old works, relics of Austrian rule, which have been placed or retained in a condition of service, and there is no spot of possible offence to the country, I firmly believe,—from the returns I have now lying before me,—for which absolute provision for defence is not made or projected. And there is this remarkable in the calm courage and foresight of the Italian Government, that they never hesitate to declare what the objects of their defence are. In what we should call our estimates, they set forth that Rome is to be fortified by an entrenched camp, to secure the capital from sudden attack, and to guarantee it from the risk of bombardment with an ordinary siege-train. That Capua is to be fortified as a *dépôt* for stores, and of "*appui*" for the defence of Naples, and would make her independent of the chances of Upper Italy, to protect the capital against attack from the south, and to cover the retreat on Naples of an Army which might be obliged to abandon Rome. And a nation who are so determined to sacrifice the brilliant in favour of the useful, who do not hesitate to declare, in the face of day, what their intentions are, must needs cause themselves to be respected, even in this first flush and youth of their union. Again must be noticed the war of the coast, and it is here that Italy has so great an advantage. Italy has the same advantage, from her long sea coast and her growing maritime power, that makes England, for imperial purposes, the strongest military power in the world, that is, in the possession of sea-bases from which expeditions can be launched against the most remote of her enemies.

Now, having given very briefly and very imperfectly a general outline of the Italian Army, let us see its application.

First, as to the recruits. The levies of the military district of Rome were, on the first of January in this year, taken for the first time. It was a matter of some little anxiety, for Rome had been accustomed to no soldiers but mercenaries, and I, with some curiosity, watched the recruits. Nearly 1,700 men walked into Rome, in the

early days of winter, from their mountain and village parishes. They came clad in goat-skins and shod with sandals, and such equipments as befitted the mountaineer, but with small thought of wearing a shoe, or putting on a uniform or a shako. H.R.H. Prince Humbert did the British Officers the honour to request their attendance at the inspection of these levies. 1,672 were due upon the list, and 1,625 were in rank. Although only ten days together, the teachable and docile qualities of those young recruits, shown in steadiness and aptitude for service, reminded me of the race from which they sprang. It was a remarkable sight. Those of my hearers who have been at Rome will remember that the great parade-ground is formed of the camp of the Prætorian Guard, the famous, though turbulent soldiers of the Empire. The parade stretches below the city walls; beyond are the magnificent hills of the Sabines, the Samnites, and the Marsi, those men who kept republican Rome at bay for hundreds of years, and at last were only conquered into allies. These very men were the ancestors of the recruits who were now to form a portion of the Army of Italy. I may be permitted to refer to a quotation which then flashed across my mind. Horace, in speaking of the Rome in his time, and how the youth had degenerated from their fathers, says:—

“Non his juvenus orta parentibus
 Infecit acquor sanguine Punico,
 Pyrrhumque et ingentem cecidit
 Antiochum Hannibalemque dirum;
 Sed rusticorum maseula militum
 Proles, Sabellis docta lignibus
 Versare glebas et severæ
 Matris ad arbitrium recisos
 Portare fustes, sol ubi montium
 Mutaret umbras et juga demeret
 Bobus fatigatis amicum
 Tempus agens abeunte curru.”

My rough English for this seems to be thoroughly realised:—

“And yet in sooth 'twas no such youth from parents such as these
 Who dyed in Carthaginian gore the level of the seas;
 Smote Pyrrhus of the ruddy locks, and stout of lith and limb
 The stalwart chief Antiochus, and Hannibal the grim;
 But manly seed of rustic breed, themselves old soldiers made
 In youth to turn the stubborn clod, with Sabine pick and spade;
 And homeward bear the billets hewn as thrifty mother bade;
 What time the sun o'er mountain ridge was flinging
 Swift shifting shadows over fell and scaur;
 Lifting the yoke from wearied oxen, bringing
 A pleasant hour with his departing car.”

The equipment of the infantry is useful and serviceable in a great degree; and they have a most ingenious manner of carrying their spare ammunition. The Italian soldier fights but with one pouch; and for a long time I was puzzled to know how the ammunition was to be carried unless with the trouble of drawing every spare cartridge from the pack. But I observed in the upper part of the pack a packet which I thought contained the spare shoes. I asked what it

was. "Oh! it is the spare ammunition." The spare ammunition is placed in a ticking cover in this packet, and if the soldier requires fresh ammunition, he undoes the button, raises the left shoulder, and out falls the cartridge whether he be fighting in line or skirmishing. Then with regard to the Bersaglieri, those wonderful troops. They are picked men, the minimum chest measure is 33 inches, and they answer in a general way in appearance to our stout drivers. Their pace, and that of the Italian infantry generally, is rapid and somewhat exhausting. The pace was originally 160, now increased to 170 gymnastic paces, which are 39 inches, the ordinary pace of 30 inches 116, and the double is 136, of 32 inches. I do not know how long they can keep up this pace, but still it is very formidable, and in the case of the Bersaglieri is shown to be very effective.

With regard to the cavalry, two innovations have been introduced, one, as it appears to me, of undoubted merit, and the other somewhat doubtful. The Italian cavalry, the light cavalry especially, skirmish extensively, but the skirmishers leave the sword on the saddle when they dismount for the purpose of fighting with a carbine armed with a bayonet. The valise is suppressed in the service, and its place is taken by two saddle bags of sheep-skin, which have a very soldierlike and neat effect. The saddle is so stuffed that there is always a current of air passing over the back bone of the horse, and yet apparently does not shift; the saddle itself rests on a blanket folded in four.

With regard to the artillery, there is a special gun which I shall now have the pleasure of mentioning. It is a gun of very light draught, and I will ask the meeting to understand that those sketches represent actually and accurately the field-day, to which the War Minister kindly invited British officers. The gun itself is 2.953 inches calibre. The velocity given the shell is 1,312 feet per second, and with 12° 6' of elevation it ranges 3,828 yards. The elevation for shrapnel is one-fifth greater, and it is used up to 2,515 yards range.

The maximum elevation given the gun in the carriage is 22°.

The lightness of the gun-carriage and limber, the high initial velocity given to its projectile, and the consequent long range, place the Italian field artillery in the foremost rank as to efficiency.

Sir WILLIAM CODRINGTON: Is it 22°?

Lord WAVENEY: The common shell at 12° 6" gives a range of 3,828. The other tables are not given. This gun is most effective with four horses and five men to a gun detachment. Two men sit with the gun, two on the limber, and one on the waggon. In case the waggons are not up, a non-commissioned officer is dismounted. This gun is the subject of a paper, well deserving reference, in the Transactions of the R.A. Institution, by Colonel Maxwell, R.A.

The diagram represents the country to the southward of Rome, and the Tiber below Rome. The idea of the manœuvre was that this body of troops was to hold their ground against a force advancing on Rome, for two hours, at the end of which time reinforcements would arrive. This stream, La Magliana, runs into the Tiber; and the lower part of this ground, with the exception of the road, was neutralized for the purpose of manœuvre. The troops left their barracks about 8.30 A.M.,

the nearest point of ground was about five miles: the furthest about six-and-a-half. They began manœuvring at twelve, manœuvred in earnest for two hours, marched back again, and there were only three men in the ambulance. The force was composed of five battalions, three of Bersaglieri and two of infantry of the line, with ten guns, six

THE MANŒUVRES OF THE MAGLIANA, JAN. 28, 1867.

Δ. Centre of defence. □1. Right flank of attack. □2. Left flank of attack.

for the attack and four for the defence, and a squadron and a half of cavalry, equally distributed. The cavalry came very little into action, as you will suppose, through not seeing them included in the sketches which represent three separate periods of the manœuvre. The custom of the judges is to take two halts during the manœuvre for the purpose of, as it were, taking count, and thus according the value of the

points verified at these periods of halt, the decision is regulated. My impression is, the condition on which the manœuvre was undertaken was thoroughly carried out, and that the ground was held for two hours.

The first movement was by massing the attacking force on that point, $\square 1$ (*Diagram*). The troops then moved athwart the crest of these hills till they reached the furthest point of formation, $\square 2$. The proper right of attack of the assaulting force was from the buildings, near the confluence of the Magliana and Tiber; the proper left of the attack from these buildings, a mile and a half to the westward. This central point was the point of defence, at which the head-quarter staff was posted. On the development of the Bersaglieri attack from the right, a portion of the troops were thrown into an oak wood in column of companies, and a portion were retained in hand. Four guns were brought up to the salient of the point Δ to bear on the Bersaglieri if they should make a flank-attack from their left or westward. This ground is exceedingly steep, and was therefore considered to be very favourable for defence. The action was commenced by heavy firing from the central point of the enemy's alignments upon our position, which was very much exposed. I have mentioned that the ground below was neutralised for the purposes of the manœuvres, and indeed it would have been very difficult to have carried troops or guns across. There is a road leading to Rome through the flat with a bridge, of which the Bersaglieri availed themselves to make a false attack in the first instance over the ground; and immediately below the central position of defence in the centre is a nullah, about wide enough to jump a gun across; but the Bersaglieri hid themselves so completely in it as in a shelter trench that from this high ground but little or nothing of the troops below could be seen.

Having made this false attack from their left, another attack was precipitated from the right which brought the defence out of the wood and left them prepared to deploy as soon as the attack from the right should attain sufficient importance. This was the closing scene of the manœuvre. The guns were withdrawn from the centre of defence towards the left flank, and then opened on the advancing troops. The skirmishing which was to protect our right was carried on to the rear, and the men were formed facing the left or false attack.

The light guns were most effectively and efficiently worked with their four men per gun detachment, and non-commissioned officers; and I saw the guns of the attacking force brought up a very steep incline in perfect order, and simply by four horses. It gave us all an impression of the hardihood of the Italian soldier, and there were officers present well acquainted with the power of infantry movement who were struck with what they call the "gliding" pace of the Bersaglieri.

My time has now come to an end. I am exceedingly sorry I have not the opportunity of impressing more strongly what I have to say; but if I could only show you the accumulation of papers and memoirs which I have had to consult, and to consult always with advantage, you would say that the difficulty of choice was very great indeed.

The chief consideration is this: The strength of armed Italy is in the system which has formed the veterans of her Army. They have done work which few other soldiers could have done under the circumstances. They have set themselves thoroughly to do their duty to their country. They are by degrees indoctrinating the whole of the Service with the stern, fixed principle of the northern military spirit. Those who have been their companions in camp and garrison will know how to value these gallant men. For readiness, for steadiness, for good conduct, the troops are to be most highly commended, even in such a difficult capital as Rome. Orderly and quiet, with the best qualities of the unspoiled soldier, they have learned that the profession of arms is an honourable one; and that though it may be difficult to maintain it in its integrity, and though the pains and troubles that wait upon it sometimes appear excessive, yet the Italians, who had little thought twenty years ago of what the merit and honour of the military service was, have now been converted into an army and a country of constitutional soldiers.

Let me now show to the ladies present how noble a share their sisters of Italy took in the war of liberation.

I read a poem of Mrs. Browning's entitled:—

"A COURT LADY."

"Her hair was tawny with gold, her eyes with purple were dark,
 Her cheeks pale opal burned with a red and restless spark.
 Never was lady of Milan nobler in name, and in race;
 Never was lady of Italy fairer to see in the face.
 Never was lady on earth more true as woman and wife;
 Larger in judgment and instinct, prouder in manners and life.
 She stood in the early morning, and said to her maidens, 'Bring
 'That silken robe made ready to wear at the Court of the King.
 'Bring me the clasps of diamond, lucid, clear of the mote,
 'Clasp me the large at the waist, and clasp me the small at the throat.
 'Diamonds to fasten the hair, and diamonds to fasten the sleeves,
 'Laces to drop from their rays like a powder of snow from the caves.'
 Gorgeous she entered, the sunlight which gather'd her up in a flame,
 While straight in her open carriage, she to the Hospital came.
 In she went at the door, and gazing from end to end;
 'Many and low are the pallets, but each is the place of a friend.'
 Up she pass'd through the wards, and stood at a young man's bed,
 Bloody the band on his brow, and livid the droop of his head.
 'Art thou a Lombard, my brother? Happy art thou,' she cried,
 And smil'd like Italy on him; he dream'd in her face and died.
 Pale with his passing soul, she went on still to a second;
 He was a grave hard man, whose years by dungeons were reckoned.
 Wounds in his body were sore, wounds in his life were sorer;
 'Art thou a Romagnole?' Her eyes drove lightnings before her.
 'Austrian and Priest had joined to double and tighten the cord,
 'Able to bind thee, O strong one—free by the stroke of a sword.'

Down she stooped to a pallet where lay a face like a girl's,
 Young and pathetic with dying—a deep black hole in the curls.
 'Art thou from Tuscany, brother? and seest thou dreaming in pain;
 'Thy mother stand in the piazza, searching the list of the slain.'
 Kind as a mother herself, she touched his cheek with her hands,
 'Blessed is she who has borne thee, although she should weep as she stands.'

On she passed to a Frenchman, his arm carried off by a ball;
 Kneeling 'O more than my brother! how shall I thank thee for all?
 'Each of the heroes around us has fought for his land and line,
 'But thou hast fought for a stranger, in hate of a wrong not thine.
 'Happy are all free peoples too strong to be dispossessed,
 'But blessed are those among nations who dare to be strong for the rest.'
 Ever she passed on her way, and came to a couch where pined
 One with a face from Venetia, white with a hope out of mind;
 Long she stood and gazed, and twice she tried at the name,
 But two great crystal tears were all that faltered and came.
 Only a tear for Venice? she turned as in passion and loss,
 And stooped to his forehead, and kissed it, as if she were kissing the cross.
 Faint with that strain of heart, she moved on then to another,
 Stern and strong in his death—'And dost thou suffer, my brother?'
 Holding his hands in hers—'Out of the Piedmont lion,
 'Cometh the sweetness of freedom! sweetest to live, or to die on.'
 Holding his cold rough hands, 'Well, oh well, have ye done
 'In noble, noble Piedmont, who would not be noble alone.'
 Back he fell while she spoke, she rose to her feet with a spring,
 'That was a Piedmontese! and this is the Court of the King.'"

To H.R.H. Prince Humbert the respectful thanks of the British Officers present at Rome are eminently and in the first place due.

And I avail myself of this opportunity to express our sense of the constant courtesy shown to us by Lieut.-General Ricotti, then Minister of War; by Lieut.-General Cosenz, Commanding Military Division; and by the Staff and Officers in garrison at Rome.