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Carl von Clausewitz, ***On War, vol. 3*** [1832]

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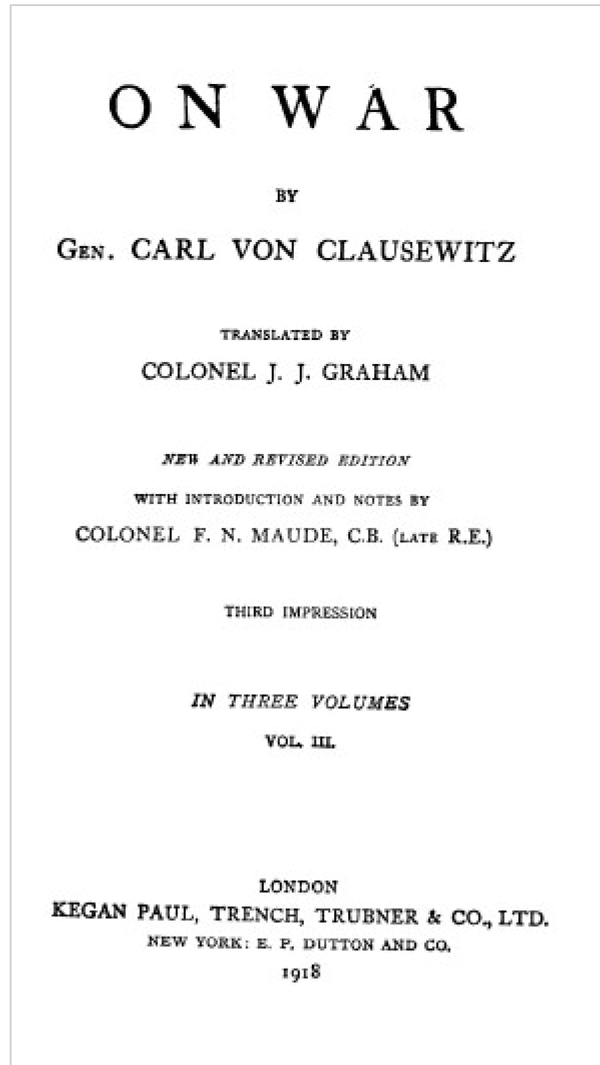

ON WAR

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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NEW AND REVISED EDITION

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

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Vol. 3 of Clausewitz's magnum opus in which he ponders the revolution in military affairs made possible by the "nation at arms" during the French Revolution. He did not live to see the book appear in print but its influence was profound in Prussia and then in the unified German nation state during the course of the 19th century. This edition is noteworthy for appearing during the First World War in England.

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BOOK VII

THE ATTACK

CHAPTER I

THE ATTACK IN RELATION TO THE DEFENCE

If two ideas form an exact logical antithesis, that is to say, if the one is the complement of the other, then, in fact, each one is implied in the other; and when the limited power of our mind is insufficient to apprehend both at once, and, by the mere antithesis, to recognise in the one perfect conception the totality of the other also, still, at all events, the one always throws on the other a strong, and in many parts a sufficient light. Thus we think the first chapter on the defence throws a sufficient light on all the points of the attack which it touches upon. But it is not so throughout in respect of every point; the train of thought could nowhere be carried to a finality; it is, therefore, natural that where the opposition of ideas does not lie so immediately at the root of the conception as in the first chapters, all that can be said about the attack does not follow directly from what has been said on the defence. An alteration of our point of view brings us nearer to the subject, and it is natural for us to observe, at this closer point of view, that which escaped observation at our former standpoint. What is thus perceived will, therefore, be the complement of our former train of thought; and it will not infrequently happen that what is said on the attack will throw a new light on the defence. In treating of the attack we shall, of course, very frequently have the same subjects before us with which our attention has been occupied in the defence. But we have no intention, nor would it be consistent with the nature of the thing, to adopt the usual plan of works on fortification, and in treating of the attack, to circumvent or upset all that we have found of positive value in the defence, by showing that against every means of defence, there is an infallible method of attack. The defence has its strong points and weak ones; if the first are even not unsurmountable, still they can only be overcome at a disproportionate price, and that must remain true from whatever point of view we look at it, or we get involved in a contradiction. Further, it is not our intention thoroughly to review the reciprocal action of the means; each means of defence suggests a means of attack; but this is often so evident, that there is no occasion to transfer oneself from our standpoint in treating of the defence to a fresh one for the attack, in order to perceive it; the one issues from the other of itself. Our object is, in each subject, to set forth the peculiar relations of the attack, so far as they do not directly come out of the defence, and this mode of treatment must necessarily lead us to many chapters to which there are no corresponding ones in the defence.

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CHAPTER II

NATURE OF THE STRATEGICAL ATTACK

We have seen that the defensive in War generally—therefore, also, the strategic defensive—is no absolute state of expectancy and warding off, therefore no completely passive state, but that it is a relative state, and consequently impregnated more or less with offensive principles. In the same way the offensive is no homogeneous whole, but incessantly mixed up with the defensive. But there is this difference between the two, that a defensive, without an offensive return blow, cannot be conceived; that this return blow is a necessary constituent part of the defensive, whilst in the attack, the blow or act is in itself one complete idea. The defence in itself is not necessarily a part of the attack; but time and space, to which it is inseparably bound, import into it the defensive as a necessary evil. For in the *first* place, the attack cannot be continued uninterruptedly up to its conclusion, it must have stages of rest, and in these stages, when its action is neutralised, the state of defence steps in of itself; in the *second* place, the space which a military force, in its advance, leaves behind it, and which is essential to its existence, cannot always be covered by the attack itself, but must be specially protected.

The act of attack in War, but particularly in that branch which is called Strategy, is therefore a perpetual alternating and combining of attack and defence; but the latter is not to be regarded as an effectual preparation for attack, as a means by which its force is heightened, that is to say, not as an active principle, but purely as a necessary evil; as the retarding weight arising from the specific gravity of the mass; it is its original sin, its seed of mortality. We say: a *retarding* weight, because if the defence does not contribute to strengthen the attack, it must tend to diminish its effect by the very loss of time which it represents. But now, may not this defensive element, which is contained in every attack, have over it a *positively disadvantageous* influence? If we suppose the *attack is the weaker, the defence the stronger form of War,* it seems to follow that the latter cannot act in a positive sense prejudicially on the former; for as long as we have sufficient force for the *weaker* form, we should have more than enough for the *stronger.* In general—that is, as regards the chief part—this is true: in its detail we shall analyse it more precisely in the chapter on the *culminating point of victory;* but we must not forget that that superiority of the *strategic defence* is partly founded in this, that the attack itself cannot take place without a mixture of defence, and of a defensive of a very weak kind; what the assailant has to carry about with him of this kind are its worst elements; with respect to these, that which holds good of the whole, in a general sense, cannot be maintained; and therefore it is conceivable that the defensive may act upon the attack positively as a weakening principle. It is just in these moments of weak defensive in the attack, that the positive action of the offensive principle in the *defensive* should be introduced. During the twelve hours' rest which usually succeeds a day's work, what a difference there is between the situation of the defender in his chosen, well-known, and prepared position, and that of the assailant occupying a bivouac into which—like a blind man—he has groped his

way, or during a longer period of rest, required to obtain provisions and to await reinforcements, &c., when the defender is close to his fortresses and supplies, whilst the situation of the assailant, on the other hand, is like that of a bird on a tree. Every attack must lead to a defence; what is to be the result of that defence depends on circumstances: these circumstances may be very favourable if the enemy's forces are destroyed; but they may be very unfavourable if such is not the case. Although this defensive does not belong to the attack itself, its nature and effects must react on the attack, and must take part in determining its value.

The deduction from this view is, that in every attack the defensive, which is necessarily an inherent feature in the same, must come into consideration, in order to see clearly the disadvantages to which it is subject, and to be prepared for them.

On the other hand, in another respect, the attack is always in itself one and the same. But the defensive has its gradations according as the principle of expectancy approaches to an end. This begets forms which differ essentially from each other, as has been developed in the chapter on the forms of defence.

As the principle of the attack is *strictly* active, and the defensive, which connects itself with it, is only a dead weight, there is, therefore, not the same kind of difference in it. No doubt, in the energy employed in the attack, in the rapidity and force of the blow, there may be a great difference, but only a difference in *degree,* not in *form.*—It is quite possible to conceive even that the assailant may choose a defensive form, the better to attain his object; for instance, that he may choose a strong position, that he may be attacked there; but such instances are so rare that we do not think it necessary to dwell upon them in our grouping of ideas and facts, which are always founded on the practical. We may, therefore, say that there are no such gradations in the attack as those which present themselves in the defence.

Lastly, as a rule, the extent of the means of attack consists of the armed force only; of course, we must add to these the fortresses, for if in the vicinity of the theatre of War, they have a decided influence on the attack. But this influence gradually diminishes as the attack advances; and it is conceivable that, in the attack, its own fortresses never can play such an important part as in the defence, in which they often become objects of primary importance. The assistance of the people may be supposed in co-operation with the attack, in those cases in which the inhabitants of the country are better disposed towards the invader of the country than they are to their own Army; finally, the assailant may also have allies, but then they are only the result of special or accidental relations, not an assistance proceeding from the nature of the aggressive. Although, therefore, in speaking of the defence we have reckoned fortresses, popular insurrections, and allies as available means of resistance; we cannot do the same in the attack; there they belong to the nature of the thing; here they only appear rarely, and for the most part accidentally.

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CHAPTER III

OF THE OBJECTS OF STRATEGICAL ATTACK

The overthrow of the enemy is the aim in War; destruction of the hostile military forces, the means both in attack and defence. By the destruction of the enemy's military force the defensive is led on to the offensive, the offensive is led by it to the conquest of territory. Territory is, therefore, the object of the attack; but that need not be a whole country, it may be confined to a part, a province, a strip of country, a fortress. All these things may have a substantial value from their political importance, in treating for peace, whether they are retained or exchanged.

The object of the strategic attack is, therefore, conceivable in an infinite number of gradations, from the conquest of the whole country down to that of some insignificant place. As soon as this object is attained, and the attack ceases, the defensive commences. We may, therefore, represent to ourselves the strategic attack as a distinctly limited unit. But it is not so if we consider the matter practically, that is in accordance with actual phenomena. Practically the moments of the attack, that is, its views and measures, often glide just as imperceptibly into the defence as the plans of the defence into the offensive. It is seldom, or at all events not always, that a General lays down positively for himself what he will conquer, he leaves that dependent on the course of events. His attack often leads him further than he had intended; after rest more or less, he often gets renewed strength, without our being obliged to make out of this two quite different acts; at another time he is brought to a standstill sooner than he expected without, however, giving up his intentions, and changing to a real defensive. We see, therefore, that if the successful defence may change imperceptibly into the offensive; so on the other hand an attack may, in like manner, change into a defence. These gradations must be kept in view, in order to avoid making a wrong application of what we have to say of the attack in general.

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CHAPTER IV

DECREASING FORCE OF THE ATTACK

This is one of the principal points in Strategy: on its right valuation in the concrete, depends our being able to judge correctly what we are able to do.

The decrease of absolute power arises—

(1) Through the object of the attack, the occupation of the enemy’s country; this generally commences first after the first decision, but the attack does not cease upon the first decision.

(2) Through the necessity imposed on the attacking Army to guard the country in its rear, in order to preserve its line of communication and means of subsistence.

(3) Through losses in action, and through sickness.

(4) Distance of the various depôts of supplies and reinforcements.

(5) Sieges and blockades of fortresses.

(6) Relaxation of efforts.

(7) Secession of allies.

But frequently, in opposition to these weakening causes, there may be many others which contribute to strengthen the attack. It is clear, at all events, that a net result can only be obtained by comparing these different quantities; thus, for example, the weakening of the attack may be partly or completely compensated, or even surpassed by the weakening of the defensive. This last is a case which rarely happens; we cannot always bring into the comparison any more forces than those in the immediate front or at decisive points, not the whole of the forces in the field.—Different examples: The French in Austria and Prussia, in Russia; the Allies in France, the French in Spain.

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CHAPTER V

CULMINATING POINT OF THE ATTACK

The success of the attack is the result of a present superiority of force, it being understood that the moral as well as physical forces are included. In the preceding chapter we have shown that the power of the attack gradually exhausts itself; possibly at the same time the superiority may increase, but in most cases it diminishes. The assailant buys up prospective advantages which are to be turned to account hereafter in negotiations for peace; but, in the meantime, he has to pay down on the spot for them a certain amount of this military force. If a preponderance on the side of the attack, although thus daily diminishing, is still maintained until Peace is concluded, the object is attained.—There are strategic attacks which have led to an immediate Peace—but such instances are rare; the majority, on the contrary, lead only to a point at which the forces remaining are just sufficient to maintain a defensive, and to wait for Peace.—Beyond that point the scale turns, there is a reaction; the violence of such a reaction is commonly much greater than the force of the blow. This we call the culminating point of the attack.—As the object of the attack is the possession of the enemy's territory, it follows that the advance must continue till the superiority is exhausted; this cause, therefore, impels us towards the ultimate object, and may easily lead us beyond it.—If we reflect upon the number of the elements of which an equation of the forces in action is composed, we may conceive how difficult it is in many cases to determine which of two opponents has the superiority on his side. Often all hangs on the silken thread of imagination.

Everything then depends on discovering the culminating point by the fine tact of judgment. Here we come upon a seeming contradiction. The defence is stronger than the attack; therefore we should think that the latter can never lead us too far, for as long as the weaker form remains strong enough for what is required, the stronger form ought to be still more so.*

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CHAPTER VI

DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY'S ARMIES

The destruction of the enemy's armed forces is the means to the end.—What is meant by this—The price it costs—Different points of view which are possible in respect to the subject.

(1) Only to destroy as many as the object of the attack requires.

(2) Or as many on the whole as is possible.

(3) The sparing of our own forces as the principal point of view.

(4) This may again be carried so far, that the assailant does nothing towards the destruction of the enemy's force *except when a favourable opportunity offers,* which may also be the case with regard to the object of the attack, as already mentioned in the third chapter.

The only means of destroying the enemy's armed force is by combat, but this may be done in two ways: (1) directly, (2) indirectly, through a combination of combats.—If, therefore, the battle is the chief means, still it is not the only means. The capture of a fortress or of a portion of territory is in itself really a destruction of the enemy's force, and it may also lead to a still greater destruction, and therefore, also, be an indirect means.

The occupation of an undefended strip of territory, therefore, in addition to the value which it has as a direct fulfilment of the end, may also reckon as a destruction of the enemy's force as well. The manœuvring, so as to draw an enemy out of a district of country which he has occupied, is somewhat similar, and must, therefore, only be looked at from the same point of view, and not as a success of arms, properly speaking.—These means are generally estimated at more than they are worth—they have seldom the value of a battle; besides which it is always to be feared that the disadvantageous position to which they lead will be overlooked; they are seductive through the low price which they cost.

We must always consider means of this description as small investments, from which only small profits are to be expected; as means suited only to very limited State relations and weak motives. Then they are certainly better than battles without a purpose—than victories, the results of which cannot be realised to the full.

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CHAPTER VII

THE OFFENSIVE BATTLE

What we have said about the defensive battle throws a strong light upon the offensive also.

We there had in view that class of battle in which the defensive appears most decidedly pronounced, in order that we might convey a more vivid impression of its nature;—but only the fewer number are of that kind; most battles are "*demi-rencontres*" in which the defensive character disappears to a great extent. It is otherwise with the offensive battle: it preserves its character under all circumstances, and can keep up that character the more boldly, as the defender is out of his proper sphere. For this reason, in the battle which is not purely defensive and in the real *rencontres,* there always remains also something of the difference of the character of the battle on the one side and on the other. The chief distinctive characteristic of the offensive battle is the manœuvre to turn or surround, therefore, the initiative as well.

A combat in lines, formed to envelop, has evidently in itself great advantages; it is, however, a subject of tactics. The attack must not give up these advantages because the defence has a means of counteracting them; for the attack itself cannot make use of that means, inasmuch as it is one that is too closely dependent upon other things connected with the defence. To be able in turn to operate with success against the flanks of an enemy, whose aim is to turn our line, it is necessary to have a well-chosen and well-prepared position. But what is much more important is, that all the advantages which the defensive possesses, cannot be made use of; most defences are poor makeshifts; the greater number of defenders find themselves in a very harassing and critical position, in which, expecting the worst, they meet the attack half-way. The consequence of this is, that battles formed with enveloping lines, or even with an oblique front, which should properly result from an advantageous relation of the lines of communication, are commonly the result of a moral and physical preponderance (Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena). Besides, in the first battle fought, the base of the assailant, if not superior to that of the defender, is still mostly very wide in extent, on account of the proximity of the frontier; he can, therefore, afford to venture a little.—The flank-attack, that is, the battle with oblique front, is moreover generally more efficacious than the enveloping form. It is an erroneous idea that an enveloping strategic advance from the very commencement must be connected with it, as at Prague. (That strategic measure has seldom anything in common with it, and is very hazardous; of which we shall speak further in the attack of a theatre of War.)

As it is an object with the Commander in the defensive battle to delay the decision as long as possible, and gain time, because a defensive battle undecided at sunset is commonly one gained: therefore the Commander, in the offensive battle, requires to hasten the decision; but, on the other hand, there is a great risk in too much haste, because it leads to a waste of forces. One peculiarity in the offensive battle is the

uncertainty, in most cases, as to the position of the enemy; it is a complete groping about amongst things that are unknown* (Austerlitz, Wagram, Hohenlinden, Jena, Katzbach). The more this is the case, so much the more concentration of forces becomes paramount, and turning a flank to be preferred to surrounding. That the principal fruits of victory are first gathered in the pursuit, we have already learnt in the twelfth chapter of Book IV. According to the nature of the thing, the pursuit is more an integral part of the whole action in the offensive than in the defensive battle.

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CHAPTER VIII

PASSAGE OF RIVERS

(1) A large river which crosses the direction of the attack is always very inconvenient for the assailant: for when he has crossed it he is generally limited to one point of passage, and, therefore, unless he remains close to the river he becomes very much hampered in his movements. Whether he meditates bringing on a decisive battle after crossing, or may expect the enemy to attack him, he exposes himself to great danger; therefore, without a decided superiority, both in moral and physical force, a General will not place himself in such a position.

(2) From this mere disadvantage of placing a river behind an Army, a river is much oftener capable of defence than it would otherwise be. If we suppose that this defence is not considered the only means of safety, but is so planned that even if it fails, still a stand can be made near the river, then the assailant in his calculations must add to the resistance which he may experience in the defence of the river, all the advantages mentioned in No. (1) as being on the side of the defender of a river, and the effect of the two together is, that we usually see Generals show great respect to a river before they attack it if it is defended.

(3) But in the preceding book we have seen, that under certain conditions, the real defence of a river promises right good results; and if we refer to experience, we must allow that such results follow in reality much more frequently than theory promises, because in theory we only calculate with real circumstances as we find them take place, while in the execution, things commonly appear to the assailant much more difficult than they really are, and they become therefore a greater clog on his action.

Suppose, for instance, an attack which is not intended to end in a great solution, and which is not conducted with thorough energy, we may be sure that in carrying it out a number of little obstacles and accidents, which no theory could calculate upon, will start up to the disadvantage of the assailant, because he is the acting party, and must, therefore, come first into collision with such impediments. Let us just think for a moment how often some of the insignificant rivers of Lombardy have been successfully defended!—If, on the other hand, cases may also be found in military history, in which the defence of rivers has failed to realise what was expected of them, that lies in the extravagant results sometimes looked for from this means; results not founded in any kind of way on its tactical nature, but merely on its well-known efficacy, to which people have thought there were no bounds.

(4) It is only when the defender commits the mistake of placing his entire dependence on the defence of a river, so that in case it is forced he becomes involved in great difficulty in a kind of catastrophe, it is only then that the defence of a river can be looked upon as a form of defence favourable to the attack, for it is certainly easier to force the passage of a river than to gain an ordinary battle.

(5) It follows of itself from what has just been said that the defence of a river may become of great value if no great solution is desired, but where that is to be expected, either from the superior numbers or energy of the enemy, then this means, if wrongly used, may turn to the positive advantage of the assailant.

(6) There are very few river-lines of defence which cannot be turned either on the whole length or at some particular point. Therefore the assailant, superior in numbers and bent upon serious blows, has the means of making a demonstration at one point and passing at another, and then by superior numbers, and advancing, regardless of all opposition, he can repair any disadvantageous relations in which he may have been placed by the issue of the first encounters: for his general superiority will enable him to do so. It very rarely happens that the passage of a river is actually tactically forced by overpowering the enemy's principal post by the effect of superior fire and greater valour on the part of the troops, and the expression, *forcing a passage* is only to be taken in a strategic sense, in so far that the assailant by his passage at an undefended or only slightly defended point within the line of defence, braves all the dangers which, in the defender's view, should result to him through the crossing.

But the worst which an assailant can do, is to attempt a real passage at several points, unless they lie close to each other and admit of all the troops joining in the combat; for as the defender must necessarily have his forces separated, therefore, if the assailant breaks up his in like manner, he throws away his natural advantage. In that way Bellegarde lost the battle on the Mincio, 1814, where by chance both Armies passed at different points at the same time, and the Austrians were more divided than the French.

(7) If the defender remains on this side of the river, it necessarily follows that there are two ways to gain a strategic advantage over him: either to pass at some point, regardless of his position, and so to outbid him in the same means, or to give battle. In the first case, the relations of the base and lines of communication should chiefly decide, but it often happens that special circumstances exercise more influence than general relations; he who can choose the best positions, who knows best how to make his disposition; who is better obeyed, whose Army marches fastest, &c., may contend with advantage against general circumstances. As regards the second means, it presupposes on the part of the assailant the means, suitable relations, and the determination to fight; but when these conditions may be presupposed, the defender will not readily venture upon this mode of defending a river.

(8) As a final result, we must therefore give as our opinion that, although the passage of a river in itself rarely presents great difficulties, yet in all cases not immediately connected with a great decision, so many apprehensions of the consequences and of future complications are bound up with it, that at all events the progress of the assailant may easily be so far arrested that he either leaves the defender on this side the river, or he passes, and then remains close to the river. For it rarely happens two Armies remain any length of time confronting one another on different sides of a river.

But also in cases of a great solution, a river is an important object; it always weakens and deranges the offensive; and the most fortunate thing in this case is, if the defender is induced through that danger to look upon the river as a tactical barrier, and to make the particular defence of that barrier the principal act of his resistance so that the assailant at once obtains the advantage of being able to strike a decisive blow in a very easy manner.—Certainly, in the first instance, this blow will never amount to a complete defeat of the enemy, but it will consist of several advantageous combats, and these bring about a state of general relations very adverse to the enemy, as happened to the Austrians on the Lower Rhine, 1796.*

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CHAPTER IX

ATTACK OF DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

In the book on the defence, it has been sufficiently explained how far defensive positions can compel the assailant either to attack them, or to give up his advance. Only those which can effect this are subservient to our object, and suited to wear out or neutralise the forces of the aggressor, either wholly or in part, and in so far the attack can do nothing against such positions, that is to say, there are no means at its disposal by which to counterbalance this advantage. But defensive positions are not all really of this kind. If the assailant sees he can pursue his object without attacking such a position, it would be an error to make the attack; if he cannot follow out his object, then it is a question whether he cannot manœuvre the enemy out of his position by threatening his flank. It is only if such means are ineffectual, that a Commander determines on the attack of a good position, and then an attack directed against one side, always in general presents the less difficulty; but the choice of the side must depend on the position and direction of the mutual lines of retreat, consequently, on the threatening the enemy's retreat, and covering our own. Between these two objects a competition may arise, in which case the first is entitled to the preference, as it is of an offensive nature; therefore homogeneous with the attack, whilst the other is of a defensive character. But it is certain, and may be regarded as a truth of the first importance, that *to attack an enemy thoroughly inured to War, in a good position, is a critical thing.* No doubt instances are not wanting of such battles, and of successful ones too, as Torgau, Wagram (we do not say Dresden, because we cannot call the enemy there quite War seasoned); but upon the whole, the danger is small, and it vanishes altogether, opposed to the infinite number of cases in which we have seen the most resolute Commanders make their bow before such positions. (Torres Vedras.)

We must not, however, confuse the subject now before us with ordinary battles. Most battles are real "*rencontres,*" in which one party certainly occupies a position, but one which has not been prepared.

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CHAPTER X

ATTACK OF AN ENTRENCHED CAMP

It was for a time the fashion to speak with contempt of entrenchments and their utility. The cordon lines of the French frontier, which had been often burst through; the entrenched camp at Breslau in which the Duke of Bevern was defeated, the battle of Torgau, and several other cases, led to this opinion of their value; and the victories of Frederick the Great, gained by the principle of movement and the use of the offensive, threw a fresh light on all kinds of defensive action, all fighting in a fixed position, particularly in entrenchments, and brought them still more into contempt. Certainly, when a few thousand men are to defend several miles of country, and when entrenchments are nothing more than ditches reversed, they are worth nothing, and they constitute a dangerous snare through the confidence which is placed in them. But is it not inconsistent, or rather nonsensical, to extend this view even to the *idea of field fortification,* in a mere swaggering spirit (as Templehof does)? What would be the object of entrenchments generally, if not to strengthen the defence? No, not only reason but experience, in hundreds and thousands of instances, show that a well-traced, sufficiently manned, and well-defended entrenchment is, *as a rule, to be looked upon as an impregnable point,* and is also so regarded by the attack.* Starting from this point of the efficiency of a single entrenchment, we argue that there can be no doubt as to the attack of an entrenched camp being a most difficult undertaking, and one in which generally it will be impossible for the assailant to succeed.

It is consistent with the nature of an entrenched camp that it should be weakly garrisoned; but with good, natural obstacles of ground and strong field works, it is possible to bid defiance to superior numbers. Frederick the Great considered the attack of the camp of Pirna as impracticable, although he had at his command double the force of the garrison; and although it has been since asserted, here and there, that it was quite possible to have taken it; the only proof in favour of this assertion is founded on the bad condition of the Saxon troops; an argument which does not at all detract in any way from the value of entrenchments. But it is a question, whether those who have since contended not only for the feasibility but also for the facility of the attack would have made up their minds to execute it at the time.

We, therefore, think that the attack of an entrenched camp belongs to the category of quite exceptional means on the part of the offensive. It is only if the entrenchments have been thrown up in haste, are not completed, still less strengthened, by obstacles to prevent their being approached, or when, as is often the case taken altogether, the whole camp is only an outline of what it was intended to be, a half-finished ruin, that then an attack on it may be advisable, and at the same time become the road to gain an easy conquest over the enemy.

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CHAPTER XI

ATTACK OF A MOUNTAIN RANGE

From the fifth and following chapters of the sixth book may be deduced sufficiently the strategic relations of a mountain generally, both as regards the defence and the attack. We have also there endeavoured to explain the part which a mountain range plays as a line of defence, properly so called, and from that naturally follows how it is to be looked upon in this signification from the side of the assailant. There remains, therefore, little for us to say here on this important subject. Our chief result was, that the defence must choose as his point of view a secondary combat, or the entirely different one of a great general action; that in the first case the attack of a mountain can only be regarded as a necessary evil, because all the circumstances are unfavourable to it; but in the second case the advantages are on the side of the attack.

An attack, therefore, armed with the means and the resolution for a battle, will give the enemy a meeting in the mountains, and certainly find his account in so doing.

But we must here once more repeat that it will be difficult to obtain respect for this conclusion, because it runs counter to appearances, and is also, at first sight, contrary to the experience of War. It has been observed, in most cases hitherto, that an Army pressing forward to the attack (whether seeking a great general action or not), has considered it an unusual piece of good fortune if the enemy has not occupied the intervening mountains, and has itself then hastened to be beforehand in the occupation of them. No one will find this forestalling of the enemy in any way inconsistent with the interests of the assailant; in our view this is also quite admissible, only we must point out clearly a fine distinction here between circumstances.

An Army advancing against the enemy, with the design of bringing him to a general action, if it has to pass over an unoccupied range of mountain, has naturally to apprehend that the enemy may, at the last moment, block up those very passes which it proposes to use on its march: in such a case, the assailant will by no means have the same advantages as if the enemy occupied merely an ordinary mountain position. The latter is, for instance, not then in a position extended beyond measure, nor is he in uncertainty as to the road which the assailant will take; the assailant has not been able to choose his road with reference to the enemy's position, and therefore this battle in the mountains is not then united with all those advantages on his side of which we have spoken in the sixth book; under such circumstances, the defender might be found in an impregnable position.—According to this, the defender might even have means at his command of making advantageous use of the mountains for a great battle.—This is, at any rate, possible; but if we reflect on the difficulties which the defender would have to encounter in establishing himself in a strong position in the mountains just at the last moment, particularly if he has left it entirely unoccupied before, we may put down this means of defence as one upon which no dependence can be placed, and therefore as one, the *probability* of which the assailant has little

reason to dread. But even if it is a very improbable case, yet still it is natural to fear it; for in War, many a thing is very natural, and yet in a certain measure superfluous.

But another measure which the assailant has to apprehend here is, a preliminary defence of the mountains by an advance guard or chain of outposts. This means also will seldom accord with the interests of the defender, but the assailant has not the means of discerning how far it may be beneficial to the defender or otherwise, and therefore he has only to provide against the worst.

Further, our view by no means excludes possibility of a position being quite unassailable from the mountainous character of the ground: there are such positions which are not, on that account, in the mountains (Pirna, Schmotseifen, Meissen, Feldkirch), and it is just because they are not in the mountains, that they are so well suited for defence. We may also very well conceive that positions may be found in mountains themselves where the defender might avoid the ordinary disadvantages of mountain positions, as, for instance, on lofty *plateaux;* but they are not common, and we can only take into our view the generality of cases.

It is just in military history that we see how little mountain positions are suited to decisive defensive battles, for great Generals have always preferred a position in the plains, when it was their object to fight a battle of the first order; and throughout the whole range of military history, there are no examples of decisive battles in the mountains, except in the Revolutionary Wars, and even there it was plainly a false application and analogy which led to the use of mountain positions, where of necessity a decisive battle had to be fought (1793 and 1794 in the Vosges, and 1795, 1796, and 1797 in Italy). Melas has been generally blamed for not having occupied the Alpine passes in 1800; but such criticisms are nothing more than "early notions"—we might say—childlike judgments founded on appearances Buonaparte, in Melas's place, would just as little have thought of occupying the passes.

The dispositions for the attack of mountain positions are mostly of a tactical nature; but we think it necessary to insert here the following remarks as to the general outline, consequently as to those parts which come into immediate contact with, and are coincident with, Strategy.

(1) As we cannot move wide of the roads in mountains as we can in other districts, and form two or three columns out of one, when the exigency of the moment requires that the mass of the troops should be divided; but on the contrary, we are generally confined to long defiles; the advance in mountains must generally be made on several roads, or rather upon a somewhat broader front.

(2) Against a mountain line of defence of wide extent, the attack must naturally be made with concentrated forces; to surround the whole cannot be thought of there, and if an important result is to be gained from victory, it must be obtained rather by bursting through the enemy's line, and separating the wings, than by surrounding the force, and so cutting it off. A rapid continuous advance upon the enemy's principal line of retreat is there the natural endeavour of the assailant.

(3) But if the enemy to be attacked occupies a position somewhat concentrated, turning movements are an essential part of the scheme of attack, as the front attacks fall upon the mass of the defender's forces; but the turning movements again must be made more with a view to cutting off the enemy's retreat, than as a tactical rolling up of the flank or attack on the rear; for mountain positions are capable of a prolonged resistance even in rear if forces are not wanting, and the quickest result is invariably to be expected only from the enemy's apprehension of losing his line of retreat; this sort of uneasiness arises sooner, and acts more powerfully in mountains, because, when it comes to the worst, it is not so easy to make room sword in hand. A mere demonstration is no sufficient means here; it might certainly manœuvre the enemy out of his position, but would not ensure any special result; the aim must therefore be to cut him off, in reality, from his line of retreat.

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CHAPTER XII

ATTACK OF CORDON LINES

If a supreme decision should lie in their defence and their attack, they place the assailant in an advantageous situation, for their wide extent is still more in opposition to all the requirements of a decisive battle than the direct defence of a river or a mountain range. Eugene's lines of Denain, 1712, are an illustration to the point here, for their loss was quite equal to a complete defeat, but Villars would hardly have gained such a victory against Eugene in a concentrated position. If the offensive side does not possess the means required for a decisive battle, then even lines are treated with respect, that is, if they are occupied by the main body of an Army; for instance, those of Stollhofen, held by Louis of Baden in the year 1703, were respected even by Villars. But if they are only held by a secondary force, then it is merely a question of the strength of the detachment which we can spare for their attack. The resistance in such cases is seldom great, but at the same time the result of the victory is seldom worth much.

The circumvallation lines of a besieger have a peculiar character, of which we shall speak in the chapter on the attack of a theatre of War.

All positions of the cordon kind, as, for instance, entrenched lines of outposts, &c. &c., have always this property, that they can be easily broken through; but when they are not forced with a view of going further and bringing on a decision, there is so little to be gained in general by the attack, that it hardly repays the trouble expended.

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CHAPTER XIII

MANŒUVRING

(1) We have already touched upon this subject in the thirtieth chapter of the sixth book. It is one which concerns the defence and the attack in common; nevertheless it has always in it something more of the nature of the offensive than the defensive. We shall therefore now examine it more thoroughly.

(2) Manœuvring is not only the opposite of executing the offensive by force, by means of great battles; it stands also opposed to every such execution of the offensive as proceeds directly from offensive means, let it be either an operation against the enemy's communications, or line of retreat, a diversion, &c. &c.

(3) If we adhere to the ordinary use of the word, there is in the conception of manœuvring an effect which is first *produced,* to a certain extent, from nothing, that is, from a state of rest or *equilibrium* through the mistakes into which the enemy is enticed. It is like the first moves in a game of chess. It is, therefore, a game of evenly balanced powers, to obtain results from favourable opportunity, and then to use these as an advantage over the enemy.

(4) But those interests which, partly as the final object, partly as the principal supports (pivot) of action, must be considered in this matter, are chiefly:

(*a*) The subsistence from which it is our object to cut off the enemy, or to impede his obtaining.

(*b*) The junction with other columns.

(*c*) The threatening other communications with the interior of the country, or with other Armies or columns.

(*d*) Threatening the retreat.

(*e*) Attack of isolated points with superior forces.

These five interests may establish themselves in the smallest features of detail belonging to any particular situation; and any such object then becomes, on that account, a point round which everything for a time revolves. A bridge, a road, or an entrenchment, often thus plays the principal part. It is easy to show in each case that it is only the relation which any such object has to one of the above interests which gives it importance.

(*f*) The result of a successful manœuvre, then, for the offensive, or rather for the active party (which may certainly be just as well the defensive), is the possession of a piece of land, a magazine, &c.

(*g*) In a strategic manœuvre two converse propositions appear, which look like different manœuvres, and have sometimes served for the derivation of false maxims and rules, and have four branches, which are, however, in reality, all necessary constituents of the same thing, and are to be regarded as such. The first antithesis is the surrounding the enemy, and the operating on interior lines; the second is the concentration of forces, and their extension over several posts.

(*h*) As regards the first antithesis, we certainly cannot say that one of its members deserves a general preference over the other; for partly it is natural that action of one kind calls forth the other as its natural counterpoise, its true remedy; partly the enveloping form is homogeneous to the attack, but the use of interior lines to the defence; and therefore, in most cases, the first is more suitable to the offensive side, the latter to the defensive. That form will gain the upper hand which is used with the greatest skill.

(*i*) The branches of the other antithesis can just as little be classed the one above the other. The stronger force has the choice of extending itself over several posts; by that means he will obtain for himself a convenient strategic situation, and liberty of action in many respects, and spare the physical powers of his troops. The weaker, on the other hand, must keep himself more concentrated, and seek by rapidity of movement to counteract the disadvantage of his inferior numbers. This greater mobility supposes greater readiness in marching. The weaker must therefore put a greater strain on his physical and moral forces—a final result which we must naturally come upon everywhere if we would always be consistent, and which, therefore, we regard, to a certain extent, as the logical test of the reasoning. The campaigns of Frederick the Great against Daun, in the years 1759 and 1760, and against Laudon, 1761, and Montecuculis against Turenne in 1673, 1675, have always been reckoned the most scientific combinations of this kind, and from them we have chiefly derived our view.

(*k*) Just as the four parts of the two antitheses above supposed must not be abused by being made the foundation of false maxims and rules, so we must also give a caution against attaching to other general relations, such as base, ground, &c., an importance and a decisive influence which they do not in reality possess. The smaller the interests at stake, so much the more important the details of time and place become, so much the more that which is general and great falls into the background, having, in a certain measure, no place in small calculations. Is there to be found, viewed, generally, a more absurd situation than that of Turenne in 1675, when he stood with his back close to the Rhine, his army along a line of fifteen miles in extent, and with his bridge of retreat at the extremity of his right wing? But his measures answered their object, and it is not without reason that they are acknowledged to show a high degree of skill and intelligence. We can only understand this result and this skill when we look more closely into details, and judge of them according to the value which they must have had in this particular case.

We are convinced that there are no rules of any kind for strategic manœuvring; that no method, no general principle can determine the mode of action; but that superior energy, precision, order, obedience, intrepidity in the most special and trifling

circumstances may find means to obtain for themselves signal advantages, and that, therefore, victory will depend chiefly on those qualities.

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CHAPTER XIV

ATTACK OF MORASSES, INUNDATIONS, WOODS

Morasses, that is, impassable swamps, which are only traversed by a few embankments, present peculiar difficulties to the tactical attack, as we have stated in treating of the defence. Their breadth hardly ever admits of the enemy being driven from the opposite bank by artillery, and of the construction of a roadway across. The strategic consequence is that endeavours are made to avoid attacking them by passing round them. Where the state of culture, as in many low countries, is so great that the means of passing are innumerable, the resistance of the defender is still strong enough relatively, but it is proportionably weakened for an absolute decision, and, therefore, wholly unsuitable for it. On the other hand, if the low land (as in Holland) is aided by inundations, the resistance may become absolute, and defy every attack. This was shown in Holland in the year 1672, when, after the conquest and occupation of all the fortresses outside the margin of the inundation, 50,000 French troops became available, who,—first under Condé and then under Luxemburg,—were unable to force the line of inundation, although it was only defended by about 20,000 men. The campaign of the Prussians, in 1787, under the Duke of Brunswick, against the Dutch, ended, it is true, in a quite contrary way, as these lines were then carried by a force very little superior to the defenders, and with trifling loss; but the reason of that is to be found in the dissensions amongst the defenders from political animosities, and a want of unity in the command. Nothing, however, is more certain than that the success of the campaign, that is, the advance through the last line of inundation up to the walls of Amsterdam, depended on a point of such extreme nicety that it is impossible to draw any general deduction from this case. The point alluded to was the leaving unguarded the Sea of Haarlem. By means of this, the Duke turned the inundation line, and got in rear of the post of Amselvoen. If the Dutch had had a couple of armed vessels on this lake the Duke would never have got to Amsterdam, for he was “at the end of his resources.” What influence that might have had on the conclusion of peace does not concern us here, but it is certain that any further question of carrying the last line of inundation would have been put an end to completely.

The winter is, no doubt, the natural enemy of this means of defence, as the French have shown in 1794 and 1795, but it must be a *severe* winter.

Woods, which are scarcely passable, we have also included amongst the means which afford the defence powerful assistance. If they are of no great depth then the assailant may force his way through by several roads running near one another, and thus reach better ground, for no one point can have any great tactical strength, as we can never suppose a wood as absolutely impassable as a river or a morass.—But when, as in Russia and Poland, a very large tract of country is nearly everywhere covered with wood, and the assailant has not the power of getting beyond it, then, certainly, his situation becomes very embarrassing. We have only to think of the difficulties he must contend with to subsist his Army, and how little he can do in the depths of the

forest to make his ubiquitous adversary feel his superiority in numbers. Certainly this is one of the worst situations in which the offensive can be placed.

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CHAPTER XV

ATTACK OF A THEATRE OF WAR WITH THE VIEW TO A DECISION

Most of the subjects have been already touched upon in the sixth book, and by their mere reflection, throw sufficient light on the attack.

Moreover, the conception of an enclosed theatre of War, has a nearer relation to the defence than to the attack. Many of the leading points, *the object of attack, the sphere of action of victory,* &c., have been already treated of in that book, and that which is most decisive and essential on the nature of the attack, cannot be made to appear until we get to the plan of War; still there remains a good deal to say here, and we shall again commence with the campaign, *in which a great decision is positively intended.*

(1) The first aim of the attack is a victory. To all the advantages which the defender finds in the nature of his situation, the assailant can only oppose superior numbers; and, perhaps, in addition, the slight advantage which the feeling of being the offensive and advancing side gives an Army. The importance of this feeling, however, is generally overrated; for it does not last long, and will not hold out against real difficulties. Of course, we assume that the defender is as faultless and judicious in all he does as the aggressor. Our object in this observation is to set aside those vague ideas of sudden attack and surprise which, in the attack, are generally assumed to be fertile sources of victory, and which yet, in reality, never occur except under special circumstances. The nature of the real strategic surprise, we have already spoken of elsewhere.—If, then, the attack is inferior in physical power, it must have the ascendancy in moral power, in order to make up for the disadvantages which are inherent in the offensive form; if the superiority in that way is also wanting, then there are no good grounds for the attack, and it will not succeed.

(2) As prudence is the real genius of the defender, so boldness and self-confidence must animate the assailant. We do not mean that the opposite qualities in each case may be altogether wanting, but that the qualities named have the greatest affinity to the attack and defence respectively. These qualities are only in reality necessary because action in War is no mere mathematical calculation; it is activity which is carried on, if not in the dark, at all events in a feeble twilight, in which we must trust ourselves to the leader who is best suited to carry out the aim we have in view.—The weaker the defender shows himself morally, the bolder the assailant should become.

(3) For victory, it is necessary that there should be a battle between the enemy's principal force and our own. This is less doubtful as regards the attack than in regard to the defence, for the assailant goes in search of the defender in his position. But we have maintained (in treating of the defensive) that the offensive should not seek the defender out if he has placed himself in a *false* position, because he may be sure that the defender will seek *him* out, and then he will have the advantage of fighting where

the defender has not prepared the ground. Here all depends on the road and direction which have the greatest importance; this is a point which was not examined in the defence, being reserved for the present chapter. We shall, therefore, say what is necessary about it here.

(4) We have already pointed out those objects to which the attack should be more immediately directed, and which, therefore, are the ends to be obtained by victory; now, if these are within the theatre of War which is attacked, and within the probable sphere of victory, then the road to them is the natural direction of the blow to be struck. But we must not forget that the object of the attack does not generally obtain its signification until victory has been gained, and therefore the mind must always embrace the idea of victory with it; the principal consideration for the assailant is, therefore, not so much merely to reach the object as to reach it a conqueror; therefore the direction of his blow should be not so much on the object itself as on the way which the enemy's Army must take to reach it. This way is the immediate object of the attack. To fall in with the enemy before he has reached this object, to cut him off from it, and in that position to beat him—to do this is to gain an intensified victory.—If, for example, the enemy's capital is the object of the attack, and the defender has not placed himself between it and the assailant, the latter would be wrong in marching direct upon the capital, he would do much better by taking his direction upon the line connecting the defender's Army with the capital, and seeking there the victory which shall place the capital in his hands.

If there is no great object within the assailant's sphere of victory, then the enemy's line of communication with the nearest great object to him is the point of paramount importance. The question, then, for every assailant to ask himself is, If I am successful in the battle, what is the first use I shall make of the victory? The object to be gained, as indicated by the answer to this question, shows the natural direction for his blow. If the defender has placed himself in that direction, he has done right, and there is nothing to do but to go and look for him there. If his position is too strong, then the assailant must seek to turn it, that is, make a virtue of necessity. But if the defender has not placed himself on this right spot, then the assailant chooses that direction, and as soon as he comes in line with the defender, if the latter has not in the meantime made a lateral movement, and placed himself across his path, he should turn himself in the direction of the defender's line of communication in order to seek an action there; if the defender remains quite stationary, then the assailant must wheel round towards him and attack him in rear.

Of all the roads amongst which the assailant has a choice, the great roads which serve the commerce of the country are always the best and the most natural to choose. To avoid any very great bends, more direct roads, even if smaller, must be chosen, for a line of retreat which deviates much from a direct line is always perilous.

(5) The assailant, when he sets out with a view to a great decision, has seldom any reason for dividing his forces, and if, notwithstanding this, he does so, it generally proceeds from a want of clear views. He should therefore only advance with his columns on such a width of front as will admit of their all coming into action together. If the enemy himself has divided his forces, so much the better for the assailant, and

to preserve this further advantage small demonstrations should be made against the enemy's corps which have separated from the main body; these are the strategic *fausse attaques;* a detachment of forces *for this purpose* would then be justifiable.

Such separation into as many columns as is indispensably necessary must be made use of for the disposition of the tactical attack in the enveloping form, for that form is natural to the attack, and must not be disregarded without good reason. But it must be only of a tactical nature, for a strategic envelopment when a great blow takes place is a complete waste of power. It can only be excused when the assailant is so strong that there can be no doubt at all about the result.

(6) But the attack also requires prudence, for the assailant has also a rear, and has communications which must be protected. This service of protection must be performed as far as possible by the manner in which the Army advances, that is, *eo ipso* by the Army itself. If a force must be specially detailed for this duty, and therefore a partition of forces is required, this cannot but naturally weaken the force of the blow itself.—As a large Army is always in the habit of advancing with a front of a day's march at least in breadth, therefore, if the lines of retreat and communication do not deviate much from the perpendicular, the covering of those lines is in most cases attained by the front of the Army.

Dangers of this description, to which the assailant is exposed, must be measured chiefly by the situation and character of the adversary. When everything lies under the pressure of an imminent great decision, there is little room for the defender to engage in undertakings of this description; the assailant has, therefore, in ordinary circumstances not much to fear. But if the advance is over, if the assailant himself is gradually passing into the defensive, then the covering of the rear becomes every moment more necessary, becomes more a thing of the first importance. For the rear of the assailant being naturally weaker than that of the defender, therefore the latter, long before he passes over to the real offensive, and even at the same time that he is yielding ground, may have commenced to operate against the communications of the assailant.

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CHAPTER XVI

ATTACK OF A THEATRE OF WAR WITHOUT THE VIEW TO A GREAT DECISION

(1) Although there is neither the will nor the power sufficient for a great decision, there may still exist a decided view in a strategic attack, but it is directed against some secondary object. If the attack succeeds, then, with the attainment of this object the whole falls again into a state of rest and equilibrium. If difficulties to a certain extent present themselves, the general progress of the attack comes to a standstill before the object is gained. Then in its place commences a mere occasional offensive or strategic manœuvring. This is the character of most campaigns.

(2) The objects which may be the aim of an offensive of this description are:

(*a*) *A strip of territory;* gain in means of subsistence, perhaps contributions, sparing our own territory, equivalents in negotiations for peace—such are the advantages to be derived from this procedure. Sometimes an idea of the credit of the Army is attached to it, as was perpetually the case in the Wars of the French Marshals in the time of Louis XIV. It makes a very important difference whether a portion of territory can be kept or not. In general, the first is the case only when the territory is on the edge of our own theatre of War, and forms a natural complement of it. Only such portions come into consideration as an equivalent in negotiating a peace, others are usually only taken possession of for the duration of a campaign, to be evacuated when winter begins.

(*b*) *One of the enemy's principal magazines.* If it is not one of considerable importance, it can hardly be looked upon as the object of an offensive determining a whole campaign. It certainly in itself is a loss to the defender, and a gain to the assailant; the great advantage, however, from it for the latter, is that the loss may compel the defender to retire a little and give up a strip of territory which he would otherwise have kept. The capture of a magazine is therefore in reality more a means, and is only spoken of here as an object, because, until captured, it becomes, for the time being, the immediate definite aim of action.

(*c*) *The capture of a fortress.*—We have made the siege of fortresses the subject of a separate chapter, to which we refer our readers. For the reasons there explained, it is easy to conceive how it is that fortresses always constitute the best and most desirable objects in those offensive Wars and campaigns in which views cannot be directed to the complete overthrow of the enemy or the conquest of an important part of his territory. We may also easily understand how it is that in the Wars in the Low Countries, where fortresses are so abundant, everything has always turned on the possession of one or other of these fortresses, so much so that the successive conquests of whole provinces *never once appear as leading features;* while, on the other hand, each of these strong places used to be regarded as a separate thing, which

had an intrinsic value in itself, and more attention was paid to the convenience and facility with which it could be attacked than to the value of the place itself.

At the same time, the attack of a place of some importance is always a great undertaking, because it causes a very large expenditure; and, in Wars in which the whole is not staked at once on the game, this is a matter which ought to be very much considered. Therefore, such a siege takes its place here as one of the most important objects of a strategic attack. The more unimportant a place, or the less earnestness there is about the siege, the smaller the preparations for it, the more it is done as a thing *en passant,* so much the smaller also will be the strategic object, and the more it will be a service fit for small forces and limited views; and the whole thing then often sinks into a kind of sham-fight, in order to close the campaign with honour, because as assailant it is incumbent to do something.

(*d*) *A successful combat, encounter, or even battle,* for the sake of trophies, or merely for the honour of the arms, sometimes even for the mere ambition of the Commanders. That this does happen no one can doubt, unless he knows nothing at all of military history. In the campaigns of the French during the reign of Louis XIV., most of the offensive battles were of this kind. But what is of more importance for us is to observe that these things are not without objective value, they are not the mere pastime of vanity; they have a very distinct influence on Peace, and therefore lead as it were direct to the object. The military fame, the moral superiority of the Army and of the General are things, the influence of which, although unseen, never ceases to bear upon the whole action in War.

The aim of such a combat of course presupposes; (α) that there is an adequate prospect of victory, (β) that there is not a very heavy stake dependent on the issue.—Such a battle fought in straitened relations, and with a limited object, must naturally not be confounded with a victory which is not turned to profitable account merely from moral weakness.

(3) With the exception of the last of these objects (*d*) they may all be attained without a combat of importance, and generally they are so obtained by the offensive. Now, the means which the assailant has at command without resorting to a decisive battle are derived from the interests which the defensive has to protect in his theatre of War; they consist, therefore in threatening his lines of communications, either through objects connected with subsistence, as magazines, fertile provinces, water communications, &c., or important points (bridges, defiles, and such like), or also by placing other detachments in the occupation of strong positions situated inconveniently near to him and from which he cannot again drive us out; the seizure of important towns, fertile districts, disturbed parts of the country, which may be excited to rebellion, the threatening of weak allies, &c. &c. Should the attack effectually interrupt the communications, and in such a manner that the defender cannot re-establish them but at a great sacrifice, it compels the defender to take up another position more to the rear or to a flank to cover the objects, at the same time giving up objects of secondary importance. Thus a strip of territory is left open; a magazine or a fortress uncovered; the one exposed to be overrun, the other to be invested. Out of this, combats greater or less may arise, but in such case they are not

sought for and treated as an object of the War but as a necessary evil, and can never exceed a certain degree of greatness and importance.

(4) The operation of the defensive on the communications of the offensive is a kind of reaction which in Wars waged for the great solution can only take place when the lines of operation are very long; on the other hand, this kind of reaction lies more in accordance with the nature of things in Wars which are not aimed at the great solution. The enemy's lines of communication are seldom very long in such a case; but then, neither is it here so much a question of inflicting great losses of this description on the enemy, a mere impeding and cutting short his means of subsistence often produces an effect, and what the lines want in length is made up for in some degree by the length of time which can be expended in this kind of contest with the enemy: for this reason, the covering his strategic flanks becomes an important object for the assailant. If, therefore, a contest (or rivalry) of this description takes place between the assailant and defender, then the assailant must seek to compensate by numbers for his natural disadvantages. If he retains sufficient power and resolution still to venture a decisive stroke against one of the enemy's bodies, or against the enemy's main Army itself, the danger which he thus holds over the head of his opponent is his best means of covering himself.

(5) In conclusion, we must notice another great advantage which the assailant certainly has over the defender in Wars of this kind, which is that of being better able to judge of the intentions and force of his adversary than the latter can in turn of his. It is much more difficult to discover in what degree an assailant is enterprising and bold than to decide whether the defender has something of consequence in his mind. Practically viewed, there usually lies already in the choice of the defensive form of War a kind of guarantee that nothing positive is intended; besides this, the preparations for a great reaction differ much more from the ordinary preparations for defence than the preparations for a great attack differ from those directed against minor objects. Finally, the defender is obliged to take his measures soonest of the two, which gives the assailant the advantage of playing the last hand.

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CHAPTER XVII

ATTACK OF FORTRESSES

The attack of fortresses cannot of course come before us here in its aspect as a branch of the science of fortification; we have only to consider the subject, first, in its relation to the strategic object with which it is connected; secondly, as regards the choice among several fortresses; and thirdly, as regards the manner in which a siege should be covered.

That the loss of a fortress weakens the defence, especially in case it forms an essential part of that defence; that many conveniences accrue to the assailant by gaining possession of one, inasmuch as he can use it for magazines and depôts, and by means of it can cover districts of country cantonments, &c.; that if his offensive at last should have to be changed into the defensive, it forms the very best support for that defensive—all these relations which fortresses bear to theatres of War, in the course of a War, make themselves sufficiently evident by what has been said about fortresses in the book on the Defence, the reflection from which throws all the light required on these relations with the attack.

In relation to the taking of strong places, there is also a great difference between campaigns which tend to a great decision and others. In the first, a conquest of this description is always to be regarded as an evil which is unavoidable. As long as there is yet a decision to be made we undertake no sieges but such as are positively unavoidable. When the decision has been already given—the crisis, the utmost tension of forces, some time passed—and when, therefore, a state of rest has commenced, then the capture of strong places serves as a consolidation of the conquests made, and then they can generally be carried out, if not without effort and expenditure of force, at least without danger. In the crisis itself the siege of a fortress heightens the intensity of the crisis to the prejudice of the offensive; it is evident that nothing so much weakens the force of the offensive, and therefore there is nothing so certain to rob it of its preponderance for a season. But there are cases in which the capture of this or that fortress is quite unavoidable, if the offensive is to be continued, and in such case a siege is to be considered as an intensified progress of the attack; the crisis will be so much greater the less there has been decided previously. All that remains now for consideration on this subject belongs to the book on the plan of the War.

In campaigns with a limited object, a fortress is generally not the means but the end itself; it is regarded as a small independent conquest, and as such has the following advantages over every other:

(1) That a fortress is a small, distinctly defined conquest, which does not require a further expenditure of force, and therefore gives no cause to fear a reaction.

(2) That in negotiating for Peace, its value as an equivalent may be turned to account.

(3) That a siege is a real progress of the attack, or at least seems so, without constantly diminishing the force like every other advance of the offensive.

(4) That the siege is an enterprise without a catastrophe.

The result of these things is that the capture of one or more of the enemy's strong places is very frequently the object of those strategic attacks which cannot aim at any higher object.

The grounds which decide the choice of the fortress which should be attacked, in case that may be doubtful, generally are:

(*a*) That it is one which can be easily kept, therefore stands high in value as an equivalent in case of negotiations for Peace.

(*b*) That the means of taking it are at hand. Small means are only sufficient to take small places; but it is better to take a small one than to fail before a large one.

(*c*) The strength of its defences, which obviously are not always in proportion to its importance in other respects. Nothing is more absurd than to waste forces before a very strong place of little importance, if a place of less strength may be made the object of attack.

(*d*) The strength of the armament and of the garrison as well. If a fortress is weakly armed and insufficiently garrisoned, its capture must naturally be easier; but here we must observe that the strength of the garrison and armament are to be reckoned amongst those things which make up the total *importance* of the place, because garrison and armaments are directly parts of the enemy's military strength, which cannot be said in the same measure of works of fortification. The conquest of a fortress with a strong garrison can, therefore, much more readily repay the sacrifice it costs than one with very strong works.

(*e*) The facility of moving the siege-train. Most sieges fail for want of means, and the means are generally wanting from the difficulty attending their transport. Eugene's siege of Landreci, 1712, and Frederick the Great's siege of Olmütz, 1758, are very remarkable instances in point.

(*f*) Lastly, there remains the facility of covering the siege as a point now to be considered.

There are two essentially different ways by which a siege may be covered: by entrenching the besieging force, that is, by a line of circumvallation, and by what is called lines of observation. The first of these methods has gone quite out of fashion, although evidently one important point speaks in its favour, namely, that by this method the force of the assailant does not suffer by division exactly that weakening which is so generally found a great disadvantage at sieges. But we grant there is still a weakening in another way, to a very considerable degree, because—

(1) The position round the fortress, as a rule, is of too great extent for the strength of the army.

(2) The garrison, the strength of which, added to that of the relieving army, would only make up the force originally opposed to us, *under these circumstances* is to be looked upon as an enemy's corps in the middle of our camp, which, protected by its walls, is *invulnerable,* or at least not to be overpowered, by which its power is immensely increased.

(3) The defence of a line of circumvallation admits of nothing but the most absolute defensive, because the circular order, facing outwards, is the weakest and most disadvantageous of all possible orders of battle, and is particularly unfavourable to any advantageous counterattacks. There is no alternative, in fact, but to defend ourselves to the last extremity within the entrenchments. That these circumstances may cause a greater diminution of the Army than one-third, which, perhaps, would be occasioned by forming an army of observation, is easy to conceive. If, added to that, we now think of the general preference which has existed since the time of Frederick the Great for the offensive, as it is called (but which, in reality, is not always so), for movements and manœuvres, and the aversion to entrenchments, we shall not wonder at lines of circumvallation having gone quite out of fashion. But this weakening of the tactical resistance is by no means its only disadvantage; and we have only reckoned up the prejudices which forced themselves into the judgment on the lines of circumvallation next in order after that disadvantage because they are nearly akin to each other. A line of circumvallation in reality only covers that portion of the theatre of War which it actually encloses; all the rest is more or less given up to the enemy if special detachments are not made use of to cover it, in which way the very partition of force which it was intended to obviate takes place. Thus the besieging Army will be always in anxiety and embarrassment on account of the convoys which it requires, and the covering the same by lines of circumvallation is not to be thought of if the Army and the siege-supplies required are considerable, and the enemy is in the field in strong force, unless under such conditions as are found in the Netherlands, where there is a whole system of fortresses lying close to each other, and intermediate lines connecting them, which cover the rest of the theatre of War, and considerably shorten the lines by which transport can be affected. In the time of Louis XIV. the conception of a theatre of War had not yet bound itself up with the position of an Army. In the Thirty Years' War particularly, the armies moved here and there sporadically before this or that fortress, in the neighbourhood of which there was no enemy's force at all, and besieged it as long as the siege equipment they had brought with them lasted, and until an enemy's Army approached to relieve the place. Then lines of circumvallation had their foundation in the nature of circumstances.

In future it is not likely they will be often used again, unless where the enemy in the field is very weak, or the conception of the theatre of War vanishes before that of the siege. Then it will be natural to keep all the forces united in the siege, as a siege by that means unquestionably gains in energy in a high degree.

The lines of circumvallation in the reign of Louis XIV., at Cambray and Valenciennes, were of little use, as the former were stormed by Turenne, opposed to

Condé, the latter by Condé opposed to Turenne; but we must not overlook the endless number of other cases in which they were respected, even when there existed in the place the most urgent need for relief; and when the Commander on the defensive side was a man of great enterprise, as in 1708, when Villars did not venture to attack the Allies in their lines at Lille. Frederick the Great at Olmütz, 1758, and at Dresden, 1760, although he had no regular lines of circumvallation, had a system which in all essentials was identical; he used the same Army to carry on the siege, and also as a covering Army. The distance of the Austrian Army induced him to adopt this plan at Olmütz, but the loss of his convoy at Domstädtel made him repent it; at Dresden in 1760, the motives which led him to this mode of proceeding were his contempt for the Army of the Holy Roman Empire, and his desire to take Dresden as soon as possible.

Lastly, it is a disadvantage in lines of circumvallation, that in case of a reverse it is more difficult to save the siege-train. If a defeat is sustained at a distance of one or more days' march from the place besieged, the siege may be raised before the enemy can arrive, and the heavy trains may, in the meantime, gain also a day's march.

In taking up a position for an Army of observation, an important question to be considered is the distance at which it should be placed from the besieged place. This question will, in most cases, be decided by the nature of the country, or by the position of other Armies or forces with which the besiegers have to remain in communication. In other respects, it is easy to see that, with a greater distance, the siege is better covered, but that by a smaller distance, not exceeding a few miles, the two Armies are better able to afford each other mutual support.

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CHAPTER XVIII

ATTACK OF CONVOYS

The attack and defence of a convoy form a subject of tactics: we should, therefore, have nothing to say upon the subject here if it was not necessary, first, to demonstrate generally the possibility of the thing, which can only be done from strategic motives and relations. We should have had to speak of it in this respect before when treating of the defence, had it not been that the little which can be said about it can easily be framed to suit for both attack and defence, while at the same time the first plays the higher part in connection with it.

A moderate convoy of three or four hundred waggons, let the load be what it may, takes up a couple of miles, a large convoy may be ten miles in length. Now, how is it possible to expect that the few troops usually allotted to a convoy will suffice for its defence? If to this difficulty we add the unwieldy nature of this mass, which can only advance at the slowest pace, and which, besides, is always liable to be thrown into disorder, and lastly, that every part of a convoy must be equally protected, because the moment that one part is attacked by the enemy, the whole is brought to a stop and thrown into a state of confusion, we may well ask, How can the covering and defence of such a train be possible at all? Or, in other words, why are not all convoys taken when they are attacked, and why are not all attacked which require an escort, or, which is the same thing, all that come within reach of the enemy? It is plain that all tactical expedients, such as Templehof's most impracticable scheme of constantly halting and assembling the convoy at short distances, and then moving off afresh; and the much better plan of Scharnhorst, of breaking up the convoy into several columns, are only slight correctives of a radical evil.

The explanation consists in this, that by far the greater number of convoys derive more security from the strategic situation in general than any other parts exposed to the attacks of the enemy, which bestows on their limited means of defence a very much increased efficacy. Convoys generally move more or less in rear of their own Army, or, at least, at a great distance from that of the enemy. The consequence is, that only weak detachments can be sent to attack them, and these are obliged to cover themselves by strong reserves. Added to this the unwieldiness itself of the carriages used makes it very difficult to carry them off; the assailant must therefore, in general, content himself with cutting the traces, taking away the horses, and blowing up powder-waggons, by which the whole is certainly detained and thrown into disorder, but not completely lost; by all this we may perceive that the security of such trains lies more in these general relations than in the defensive power of its escort. If now to all this we add the defence by the escort, which, although it cannot by marching resolutely against the enemy directly cover the convoy, is still able to derange the plan of the enemy's attack; then, at last, the attack of a convoy, instead of appearing easy and sure of success, will appear rather difficult, and very uncertain in its result.

But there remains still a chief point, which is the danger of the enemy's Army, or one of its fractions, retaliating on the assailants of its convoy, and punishing it ultimately for the undertaking by defeating it. The apprehension of this puts a stop to many undertakings, without the real cause ever appearing; so that the safety of the convoy is attributed to the escort, and people wonder how a miserable arrangement, such as an escort, should meet with such respect. In order to feel the truth of this observation we have only to think of the famous retreat which Frederick the Great made through Bohemia after the siege of Olmütz, 1758, when the half of his Army was broken into a column of companies to cover a convoy of 4000 carriages. What prevented Daun from falling on this monstrosity? The fear that Frederick would throw himself upon him with the other half of his Army, and entangle him in a battle which Daun did not desire. What prevented Laudon, who was constantly at the side of that convoy, from falling upon it at Zischbowitz sooner and more boldly than he did? The fear that he would get a rap over the knuckles. Fifty miles from his main Army and completely separated from it by the Prussian Army, he thought himself in danger of a serious defeat if the King, who had no reason at that time to be concerned about Daun, should fall upon him with the bulk of his forces.

It is only if the strategic situation of an Army involves it in the unnatural necessity of connecting itself with its convoys by the flank or by its front that then these convoys are really in great danger, and become an advantageous object of attack for the enemy, if his position allows him to detach troops for that purpose. The same campaign of 1758 affords an instance of the most complete success of an undertaking of this description, in the capture of the convoy at Domstädtel. The road to Neiss lay on the left flank of the Prussian position, and the King's forces were so neutralised by the siege and by the troops watching Daun, that the partisans had no reason to be uneasy about themselves, and were able to make their attack completely at their ease.

When Eugene besieged Landrecy in 1712, he drew his supplies for the siege from Bouchain by Denain; therefore, in reality, from the front of the strategic position. It is well known what means he was obliged to use to overcome the difficulty of protecting his convoys on that occasion, and in what embarrassments he involved himself, ending in a complete change of circumstances.

The conclusion we draw, therefore, is that however easy an attack on a convoy may appear in its tactical aspect, still it has not much in its favour on strategic grounds, and only promises important results in the exceptional instances of lines of communication very much exposed.

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CHAPTER XIX

ATTACK ON THE ENEMY'S ARMY IN ITS CANTONMENTS

We have not treated this subject in the defence, because a line of cantonments is not to be regarded as a defensive means, but as a mere existence of the Army in a state which implies little readiness for battle. In respect to this readiness for battle, we therefore did not go beyond what we required to say in connection with this condition of an Army in the thirteenth chapter of the fifth book.

But here, in considering the attack, we have to think of an enemy's Army in cantonments in all respects as a special object; for, in the first place, such an attack is of a very peculiar kind in itself; and, in the next place, it may be considered as a strategic means of particular efficacy. Here we have before us, therefore, not the question of an onslaught on a single cantonment or a small body dispersed amongst a few villages, as the arrangements for that are entirely of a tactical nature, but of the attack of a large Army, distributed in cantonments more or less extensive; an attack in which the object is not the mere surprise of a single cantonment, but to prevent the assembly of the Army.

The attack on an enemy's Army in cantonments is therefore the surprise of an Army not assembled. If this surprise succeeds fully, then the enemy's Army is prevented from reaching its appointed place of assembly, and, therefore, compelled to choose another more to the rear; as this change of the point of assembly to the rear in a state of such emergency can seldom be effected in less than a day's march, but generally will require several days, the loss of ground which this occasions is by no means an insignificant loss; and this is the first advantage gained by the assailant.

But now, this surprise which is in connection with the general relations, may certainly at the same time, in its commencement, be an onslaught on some of the enemy's single cantonments, not certainly upon all, or upon a great many, because that would suppose a scattering of the attacking Army to an extent which could never be advisable. Therefore, only the most advanced quarters, only those which lie in the direction of the attacking columns, can be surprised, and even this will seldom happen to many of them, as large forces cannot easily approach unobserved. However, this element of the attack is by no means to be disregarded; and we reckon the advantages which may be thus obtained as the second advantage of the surprise.

A third advantage consists in the minor combats forced upon the enemy in which his losses will be considerable. A great body of troops does not assemble itself at once by single battalions at the spot appointed for the general concentration of the Army, but usually forms itself by Brigades, Divisions, or Corps, in the first place, and these masses cannot then hasten at full speed to the rendezvous; in case of meeting with an enemy's column in their course, they are obliged to engage in a combat; now, they

may certainly come off victorious in the same, particularly if the enemy's attacking column is not of sufficient strength, but in conquering, they lose time, and, in most cases, as may be easily conceived, a Corps, under such circumstances, and in the general tendency to gain a point which lies to the rear, will not make any beneficial use of its victory. On the other hand, they may be beaten, and that is the most probable issue in itself, because they have not time to organise a good resistance. We may, therefore, very well suppose that in an attack well planned and executed, the assailant through these partial combats will gather up a considerable number of trophies, which become a principal point in the general result.

Lastly, the fourth advantage, and the keystone of the whole, is a certain momentary disorganisation and discouragement on the side of the enemy, which, when the force is at last assembled, seldom allows of its being immediately brought into action, and generally obliges the party attacked to abandon still more ground to his assailant, and to make a change generally in his plan of operations.

Such are the proper results of a successful surprise of the enemy in cantonments, that is, of one in which the enemy is prevented from assembling his Army without loss at the point fixed in his plan. But by the nature of the case, success has many degrees; and, therefore, the results may be very great in one case, and hardly worth mentioning in another. But even when, through the complete success of the enterprise, these results are considerable, they will seldom bear comparison with the gain of a great battle, partly because, in the first place, the trophies are seldom as great, and in the next, the moral impression never strikes so deep.

This general result must always be kept in view, that we may not promise ourselves more from an enterprise of this kind than it can give. Many hold it to be the *non plus ultra* of offensive activity; but it is not so by any means, as we may see from this analysis, as well as from military history.

One of the most brilliant surprises in history is that made by the Duke of Lorraine in 1643, on the cantonments of the French, under General Ranzan, at Duttlingen. The Corps was 16,000 men, and they lost the General commanding and 7000 men; it was a complete defeat. The want of outposts was the cause of the disaster.

The surprise of Turenne at Mergentheim (Mariendal as the French call it), in 1644, is in like manner to be regarded as equal to a defeat in its effects, for he lost 3000 men out of 8000, which was principally owing to his having been led into making an untimely stand after he got his men assembled. Such results we cannot, therefore, often reckon upon; it was rather the result of an ill-judged action than of the surprise, properly speaking, for Turenne might easily have avoided the action, and have rallied his troops upon those in more distant quarters.

A third noted surprise is that which Turenne made on the Allies under the great Elector, the Imperial General Bournonville and the Duke of Lorraine, in Alsace, in the year 1674. The trophies were very small, the loss of the Allies did not exceed 2000 or 3000 men, which could not decide the fate of a force of 50,000; but the Allies considered that they could not venture to make any further resistance in Alsace, and

retired across the Rhine again. This strategic result was all that Turenne wanted, but we must not look for the causes of it entirely in the surprise. Turenne surprised the plans of his opponents more than the troops themselves; the want of unanimity amongst the allied Generals and the proximity of the Rhine did the rest. This event altogether deserves a closer examination, as it is generally viewed in a wrong light.

In 1742, Neipperg surprised Frederick the Great in his quarters; the whole of the result was that the King was obliged to fight the battle of Mollwitz before he had collected all his forces, and with a change of front.

In 1745, Frederick the Great surprised the Duke of Lorraine in his cantonments in Lusatia; the chief success was through the real surprise of one of the most important quarters, that of Hennersdorf, by which the Austrians suffered a loss of 2000 men; the general result was that the Duke of Lorraine retreated to Bohemia by Upper Lusatia, but that did not at all prevent his returning into Saxony by the left bank of the Elbe, so that without the battle of Kesselsdorf, there would have been no important result.

1758. The Duke Ferdinand surprised the French quarters; the immediate result was that the French lost some thousands of men, and were obliged to take up a position behind the Aller. The moral effect may have been of more importance, and may have had some influence on the subsequent evacuation of Westphalia.

If from these different examples we seek for a conclusion as to the efficacy of this kind of attack, then only the two first can be put in comparison with a battle gained. But the forces engaged were only small, and the want of outposts in the system of War in those days was a circumstance greatly in favour of these enterprises. Although the four other cases must be reckoned completely successful enterprises, it is plain that not one of them is to be compared with a battle gained as respects its result. The general result could not have taken place in any of them except with an adversary weak in will and character, and therefore it did not take place at all in the case of 1742.

In 1806 the Prussian Army contemplated surprising the French in this manner in Franconia. The case promised well for a satisfactory result. Buonaparte was not present, the French Corps were in widely extended cantonments; under these circumstances, the Prussians, acting with great resolution and activity, might very well reckon on driving the French back across the Rhine, with more or less loss. But this was also all; if they reckoned upon more, for instance, on following up their advantages beyond the Rhine, or on gaining such a moral ascendancy that the French would not again venture to appear on the right bank of the river in the same campaign, such an expectation had no sufficient grounds.

In the beginning of August 1812, the Russians from Smolensk meditated falling upon the cantonments of the French when Napoleon halted his Army in the neighbourhood of Witepsk. But they wanted courage to carry out the enterprise; and it was fortunate for them they did; for as the French Commander with his centre was not only more than twice the strength of their centre, but also in himself the most resolute leader that ever lived, as further, the loss of a few miles of ground would have decided nothing,

and there was no natural obstacle in any feature of the country near enough up to which they might pursure their success, and by that means, in some measure make it certain, and lastly, as the War of the year 1812 was not in any way a campaign of that kind which draws itself in a languid way to a conclusion, but the serious plan of an assailant who had made up his mind to conquer his opponent completely—therefore the trifling results to be expected from a surprise of the enemy in his quarters appear nothing else than utterly disproportionate to the solution of the problem, they could not justify a hope of making good by their means the great inequality of forces and other relations. But this scheme serves to show how a confused idea of the effect of this means may lead to an entirely false application of the same.

What has been hitherto said, places the subject in the light of a *strategic means.* But it lies in its nature that its execution also is not purely tactical, but in part belongs again to Strategy so far, particularly that such an attack is generally made on a front of considerable width, and the Army which carries it out can, and generally will, come to blows before it is concentrated, so that the whole is an agglomeration of partial combats. We must now add a few words on the most natural organisation of such an attack.

The first condition is:

(1) To attack the front of the enemy's quarters in a certain width of front, for that is the only means by which we can really surprise several cantonments, cut off others, and create generally that disorganisation in the enemy's Army which is intended.—The number of, and the intervals between, the columns must depend on circumstances.

(2) The direction of the different columns must converge upon a point where it is intended they should unite; for the enemy ends more or less with a concentration of his force, and therefore we must do the same. This point of concentration should, if possible, be the enemy's point of assembly, or lie on his line of retreat, it will naturally be best where that line crosses an important obstacle in the country.

(3) The separate columns when they come in contact with the enemy's forces must attack them with great determination, with dash and boldness, as they have general relations in their favour, and daring is always there in its right place. From this it follows that the Commanders of the separate columns must be allowed freedom of action and full power in this respect.

(4) The tactical plan of attack against those of the enemy's troops that are the first to place themselves in position must always be directed to turn a flank, for the greatest result is always to be expected by separating the several Corps, and cutting them off.

(5) Each of the columns must be composed of portions of the three arms, and must not be stinted in cavalry, it may even sometimes be well to divide amongst them the whole of the reserve cavalry; for it would be a great mistake to suppose that this body of cavalry could play any great part in a mass in an enterprise of this sort. The first village, the smallest bridge, the most significant thicket would bring it to a halt.

(6) Although it lies in the nature of a surprise that the assailant should not send his advance-guard very far in front, that principle only applies to the first approach to the enemy's quarters. When the fight has commenced in the enemy's quarters, and therefore all that was to be expected from actual surprise has been gained, then the columns of the advance-guard of all arms should push on as far as possible, for they may greatly increase the confusion on the side of the enemy by more rapid movement. It is only by this means that it becomes possible to carry off here and there the mass of baggage, artillery, non-effectives, and camp-followers, which have to be dragged after a cantonment suddenly broken up, and these advance-guards must also be the chief instruments in turning and cutting off the enemy.

(7) Finally, the retreat in case of ill success must be thought of, and a rallying-point be fixed upon beforehand.

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CHAPTER XX

DIVERSION

According to the ordinary use of language, under the term diversion is understood such an incursion into the enemy's country as draws off a portion of his force from the principal point. It is only when this is the chief end in view, and not the gain of the object which is selected as the point of attack, that it is an enterprise of a special character, otherwise it is only an ordinary attack.

Naturally the diversion must at the same time always have an object of attack, for it is only the value of this object that will induce the enemy to send troops for its protection; besides, in case the undertaking does not succeed as a diversion, this object is a compensation for the forces expended in the attempt.

These objects of attack may be fortresses, or important magazines, or rich and large towns, especially capital cities, contributions of all kinds; lastly, assistance may be afforded in this way to discontented subjects of the enemy.

It is easy to conceive that diversions may be useful, but they certainly are not so always; on the contrary, they are just as often injurious. The chief condition is that they should withdraw from the principal theatre of the War more of the enemy's troops than we employ on the diversion; for if they only succeed in drawing off just the same number then their efficacy as diversions, properly called, ceases, and the undertaking becomes a mere subordinate attack. Even where, on account of circumstances, we have in view to attain a very great end with a very small force, as, for instance, to make an easy capture of an important fortress, and another attack is made adjoining to the principal attack, to assist the latter, that is no longer a diversion. When two States are at War, and a third falls upon one of them, such an event is very commonly called a diversion—but such an attack differs in nothing from an ordinary attack except in its direction; there is, therefore, no occasion to give it a particular name, for in theory it should be a rule only to denote by particular names such things as are in their nature distinct.

But if small forces are to attract large ones, there must obviously be some special cause, and, therefore, for the object of a diversion it is not sufficient merely to detach some troops to a point not hitherto occupied.

If the assailant with a small detachment of 1000 men overruns one of his enemy's provinces, not belonging to the theatre of War, and levies contributions, &c., it is easy to see beforehand that the enemy cannot put a stop to this by detaching 1000 men, but that if he means to protect the province from invaders, he must at all events send a considerably larger force. But it may be asked, Cannot a defender, instead of protecting his own province, restore the balance by sending a similar detachment to plunder a province in our country? Therefore, if an advantage is to be obtained by an

aggressor in this way, it must first be ascertained that there is more to be got or to be threatened in the defender's provinces than in his own. If this is the case, then no doubt a weak diversion will occupy a force on the enemy's side greater than that composing the enterprise. On the other hand, this advantage naturally diminishes as the masses increase, for 50,000 men can defend a province of moderate extent not only against equal but even against somewhat superior numbers. The advantage of large diversions is, therefore, very doubtful, and the greater they become the more decisive must be the other circumstances which favour a diversion if any good is to come out of such an enterprise upon the whole.

Now these favourable circumstances may be:

(*a*) Forces which the assailant holds available for a diversion without weakening the great mass of his force.

(*b*) Points belonging to the defender which are of vital importance to him and can be threatened by a diversion.

(*c*) Discontented subjects of the same.

(*d*) A rich province which can supply a considerable quantity of munitions of war.

If only these diversions are undertaken, which, when tested by these different considerations, promise results, it will be found that an opportunity of making a diversion does not offer frequently.

But now comes another important point. Every diversion brings War into a district into which it would not otherwise have penetrated; for that reason it will always be the means, more or less, of calling forth military forces which would otherwise have continued in abeyance, this will be done in a way which will be very sensibly felt if the enemy has any organised militia, and means of arming the Nation at large. It is quite in the natural order of things, and amply shown by experience, that if a district is suddenly threatened by an enemy's force, and nothing has been prepared beforehand for its defence, all the most efficient official functionaries immediately lay hold of and set in motion every extraordinary means that can be imagined, in order to ward off the impending danger. Thus, new powers of resistance spring up, such as are next to a people's War, and may easily excite one.

This is a point which should be kept well in view in every diversion, in order that we may not dig our own graves.

The expeditions to North Holland in 1799, and to Walcheren in 1809, regarded as diversions, are only to be justified in so far that there was no other way of employing the English troops; but there is no doubt that the sum total of the means of resistance of the French was thereby increased, and every landing in France would have just the same effect. To threaten the French coast certainly offers great advantages, because by that means an important body of troops becomes neutralised in watching the coast, but a landing with a large force can never be justifiable unless we can count on the assistance of a province in opposition to the Government.

The less a great decision is looked forward to in War the more will diversions be allowable, but so much the smaller will also certainly be the gain to be derived from them. They are only a means of bringing the stagnant masses into motion.

Execution

(1) A diversion may include in itself a real attack, then the execution has no special character in itself except boldness and expedition.

(2) It may also have as an object to appear more than it really is, being, in fact, a demonstration as well. The special means to be employed in such a case can only suggest themselves to a subtil mind well versed in men and in the existing state of circumstances. It follows from the nature of the thing that there must be a great fractioning of forces on such occasions.

(3) If the forces employed are not quite inconsiderable, and the retreat is restricted to certain points, then a reserve on which the whole may rally is an essential condition.

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CHAPTER XXI

INVASION

Almost all that we have to say on this subject consists in an explanation of the term. We find the expression very frequently used by modern authors and also that they pretend to denote by it something particular. *Guerre d'invasion* occurs perpetually in French authors. They use it as a term for every attack which enters deep into the enemy's country, and perhaps sometimes mean to apply it as the antithesis to methodical attack, that is, one which only nibbles at the frontier. But this is a very unphilosophical confusion of language. Whether an attack is to be confined to the frontier or to be carried into the heart of the country, whether it shall make the seizure of the enemy's strong places the chief object, or seek out the core of the enemy's power, and pursue it unremittingly, is the result of circumstances, and not dependent on a system. In some cases, to push forward may be more methodical, and at the same time more prudent than to tarry on the frontier, but in most cases it is nothing else than just the fortunate result of a vigorous *attack,* and consequently does not differ from it in any respect.

ON THE CULMINATING POINT OF VICTORY*

The conqueror in a War is not always in a condition to subdue his adversary completely. Often, in fact almost universally, there is a culminating point of victory. Experience shows this sufficiently; but as the subject is one especially important for the theory of War, and the pivot of almost all plans of campaigns, while, at the same time, on its surface some apparent contradictions glitter, as in ever-changing colours, we therefore wish to examine it more closely, and look for its essential causes.

Victory, as a rule, springs from a preponderance of the sum of all the physical and moral powers combined; undoubtedly it increases this preponderance, or it would not be sought for and purchased at a great sacrifice. Victory *itself* does this unquestionably; also its consequences have the same effect, but not to the utmost point—generally only up to a certain point. This point may be very near at hand, and is sometimes so near that the whole of the results of a victorious battle are confined to an increase of the moral superiority. How this comes about we have now to examine.

In the progress of action in War, the combatant force is incessantly meeting with elements which strengthen it, and others which weaken it. Hence it is a question of superiority on one side or the other. As every diminution of power on one side is to be regarded as an increase on the opposite, it follows, of course, that this double current, this ebb and flow, takes place whether troops are advancing or retiring.

It is therefore necessary to find out the principal cause of this alteration in the one case to determine the other along with it.

In advancing, the most important causes of the *increase of strength* which the assailant gains, are:

(1) The loss which the enemy's Army suffers, because it is usually greater than that of the assailant.

(2) The loss which the enemy suffers in inert military means, such as magazines, depôts, bridges, &c., and which the assailant does not share with him.

(3) That from the moment the assailant enters the enemy's territory, there is a loss of provinces to the defence, consequently of the sources of new military forces.

(4) That the advancing Army gains a portion of those resources, in other words, gains the advantage of living at the expense of the enemy.

(5) The loss of internal organisation and of the regular action of everything on the side of the enemy.

(6) That the Allies of the enemy secede from him, and others join the conqueror.

(7) Lastly, the discouragement of the enemy who lets the arms, in some measure, drop out of his hands.

The causes of *decrease of strength* in an Army advancing, are:

(1) That it is compelled to lay siege to the enemy's fortresses, to blockade them or observe them; or that the enemy, who did the same before the victory, in his retreat draws in these troops to his main body.

(2) That from the moment the assailant enters the enemy's territory, the nature of the theatre of war is changed; it becomes hostile; we must occupy it, for we cannot call any portion our own beyond what is in actual occupation and yet it everywhere presents difficulties to the whole machine which must necessarily tend to weaken its effects.

(3) That we are removing further away from our resources, whilst the enemy is drawing nearer to his; this causes a delay in the replacement of expended power.

(4) That the danger which threatens the State, rouses other powers to its protection.

(5) Lastly, the greater efforts of the adversary, in consequence of the increased danger; on the other hand, a relaxation of effort on the side of the victorious State.

All these advantages and disadvantages can exist together, meet each other in a certain measure, and pursue their way in opposite directions, except that the last meet as real opposites, cannot pass, therefore mutually exclude each other. This alone shows how infinitely different may be the effect of a victory according as it stuns the vanquished or stimulates him to greater exertions.

We shall now try to characterise, in a few words, each of these points singly.

(1) The loss of the enemy when defeated may be at the greatest in the first moment of defeat, and then daily diminish in amount until it arrives at a point where the balance is restored as regards our force; but it may go on increasing every day in an ascending ratio. The difference of situation and relations determines this. We can only say that, in general, with a good Army the first will be the case, with an indifferent Army the second; next to the spirit of the troops, the spirit of the Government is here the most important thing. It is of great consequence in War to distinguish between the two cases in practice, in order not to stop just at the point where we ought to begin in good earnest, and *vice versâ.*

(2) The loss which the enemy sustains in that part of the apparatus of War which is inert, may ebb and flow just in the same manner, and this will depend on the accidental position and nature of the depôts from which supplies are drawn. This subject, however, in the present day, cannot be compared with the others in point of importance.

(3) The third advantage must necessarily increase as the Army advances; indeed, it may be said that it does not come into consideration until an Army has penetrated far into the enemy's country; that is to say, until a third or a fourth of the country has been left in rear. In addition, the intrinsic value which a province has in connection with the War comes also into consideration.

In the same way the fourth advantage should increase with the advance.

But with respect to these two last, it is also to be observed that their influence on the combatant powers actually engaged in the struggle is seldom felt so immediately; they only work slowly and by a circuitous course; therefore we should not bend the bow too much on their account, that is to say, not place ourselves in any dangerous position.

The fifth advantage, again, only comes into consideration if we have made a considerable advance, and if by the form of the enemy's country some provinces can be detached from the principal mass, as these, like limbs compressed by ligatures, usually soon die off.

As to six and seven, it is at least probable that they increase with the advance; furthermore, we shall return to them hereafter. Let us now pass on to the causes of weakness.

(1) The besieging, blockade, and investment of fortresses generally increase as the Army advances. This weakening influence alone acts so powerfully on the *condition of the combatant force,* that it may soon outweigh all the advantages gained. No doubt, in modern times, a system has been introduced of blockading places with a small number of troops, or of watching them with a still smaller number; and also the enemy must keep garrisons in them. Nevertheless, they remain a great element of security. The garrisons consist very often in half of people, who have taken no part in

the War previously. Before those places which are situated near the line of communication, it is necessary for the assailant to leave a force at least double the strength of the garrison; and if it is desirable to lay formal siege to, or to starve out, one single considerable place, a small Army is required for the purpose.

(2) The second cause, the taking up a theatre of War in the enemy's country, increases necessarily with the advance, and if it does not further weaken the condition of the combatant force at the moment, it does so at all events in the long run.

We can only regard as our theatre of War, so much of the enemy's country as we actually possess; that is to say, where we either have small bodies in the field, or where we have left here and there strong garrisons in large towns, or stations along the roads, &c.; now however small the garrisons may be which are detached, still they weaken the combatant force considerably. But this is the smallest evil.

Every Army has strategic flanks, that is, the country which borders both sides of its lines of communications; the weakness of these parts is not sensibly felt as long as the enemy is similarly situated with respect to his. But that can only be the case as long as we are in our own country; as soon as we get into the enemy's country, the weakness of these parts is felt very much, because the smallest enterprise promises some result when directed against a long line only feebly, or not all, covered; and these attacks may be made from any quarter in an enemy's country.

The further we advance, the longer these flanks become, and the danger arising from them is enhanced in an increased ratio, for not only are they difficult to cover, but the spirit of enterprise is also first roused in the enemy, chiefly by long insecure lines of communication, and the consequences which their loss may entail in case of a retreat are matter of grave consideration.

All this contributes to place a fresh load on an advancing Army at every step of its progress; so that if it has not commenced with a more than ordinary superiority, it will feel itself always more and more cramped in its plans, gradually weakened in its impulsive force, and at last in a state of uncertainty and anxiety as to its situation.

(3) The third cause, the distance from the source from which the incessantly diminishing combatant force is to be just as incessantly filled up, increases with the advance. A conquering Army is like the light of a lamp in this respect; the more the oil which feeds it sinks in the reservoir and recedes from the focus of light, the smaller the light becomes, until at length it is quite extinguished.

The richness of the conquered provinces may certainly diminish this evil very much, but can never entirely remove it, because there are always a number of things which can only be supplied to the troops from their own country—men in particular; because the subsidies furnished by the enemy's country are, in most cases, neither so promptly nor so surely forthcoming as in our own country; because the means of meeting any unexpected requirement cannot be so quickly procured; because misunderstandings and mistakes of all kinds cannot so soon be discovered and remedied.

If a Prince does not lead his Army in person, as became the custom in the last Wars, if he is not anywhere near it, then another and very great inconvenience arises in the loss of time occasioned by communications backwards and forwards; for the fullest powers conferred on a Commander of an Army are never sufficient to meet every case in the wide expanse of his activity.

(4) The change in political alliances. If these changes, produced by a victory, should be such as are disadvantageous to the conqueror, they will probably be so in a direct relation to his progress, just as is the case if they are of an advantageous nature. This all depends on the existing political alliances, interests, customs, and tendencies, on princes, ministers, &c. In general we can only say that when a great State which has smaller Allies is conquered, these usually secede very soon from their alliance, so that the victor, in this respect, becomes stronger with every blow; but if the conquered State is small, protectors much sooner present themselves when his very existence is threatened, and others, who have helped to place him in his present embarrassment, will turn round to prevent his complete downfall.

(5) The increased resistance on the part of the enemy which is called forth. Sometimes the enemy drops his weapon out of his hands from terror and stupefaction; sometimes an enthusiastic paroxysm seizes him, every one runs to arms, and the resistance is much stronger after the first defeat than it was before. The character of the people and of the Government, the nature of the country and its political alliances, are here the data from which the probable effect must be conjectured.

What countless differences these two last points alone make in the plans which may and should be made in War in one case and another. Whilst one, through an excess of caution, and what is called methodical proceedings, fritters away his good fortune, another, from a want of rational reflection, tumbles into destruction.

In addition, we must here call to mind the supineness which not unfrequently comes over the victorious side when danger is removed; whilst, on the contrary, renewed efforts are then required in order to follow up the success. If we cast a general glance over these different and antagonistic principles, the deduction doubtless is, that the profitable use of the onward march in a War of aggression, in the generality of cases, diminishes the preponderance with which the assailant set out, or which has been gained by victory.

Here the question must naturally strike us: If this be so, what is it which impels the conqueror to follow up the career of victory to continue the offensive? And can this really be called making further use of the victory? Would it not be better to stop where as yet there is hardly any diminution of the preponderance gained?

To this we must naturally answer: the preponderance of combatant forces is only the means, not the end. The end, or object, is to subdue the enemy or at least to take from him part of his territory, in order thus to put ourselves in a condition to realise the value of the advantages we have gained when we conclude a peace. Even if our aim is to conquer the enemy completely, we must be content that, perhaps, every step we advance, reduces our preponderance, but it does not necessarily follow from this that

it will be *nil* before the fall of the enemy; the fall of the enemy may take place before that, and if it is to be obtained by the last minimum of preponderance, it would be an error not to expend it for that purpose.

The preponderance which we have or acquire in War is, therefore, the means, not the end, and it must be staked to gain the latter. But it is necessary to know how far it will reach, in order not to go beyond that point, and instead of fresh advantages, to reap disaster.

It is not necessary to introduce special examples from experience in order to prove that this is the way in which the strategic preponderance exhausts itself in the strategic attack; it is rather the multitude of instances which has forced us to investigate the causes of it. It is only since the appearance of Buonaparte that we have known campaigns between civilised nations, in which the preponderance has led, without interruption, to the fall of the enemy; before his time, every campaign ended with the victorious Army seeking to win a point where it could simply maintain itself in a state of equilibrium. At this point, the movement of victory stopped, even if a retreat did not become necessary. Now, this culminating point of victory will also appear in the future, in all Wars in which the overthrow of the enemy is not the military object of the War; and the generality of Wars will still be of this kind. The natural aim of all single plans of campaigns is the point at which the offensive changes into the defensive.

But now, to overstep this point is more than simply a *useless* expenditure of power, yielding no further result, it is a *destructive* step which causes reaction; and this reaction is, according to all general experience, productive of most disproportionate effects. This last fact is so common, and appears so natural and easy to understand, that we need not enter circumstantially into the causes. Want of organisation in the conquered land, and the very opposite effect which a serious loss instead of the looked-for fresh victory makes on the feelings, are the chief causes in every case. The moral forces, courage on the one side rising often to *audacity,* and extreme depression on the other, now begin generally their active play. The losses on the retreat are increased thereby, and the hitherto successful party now generally thanks providence if he can escape with only the surrender of all his gains, without losing some of his own territory.

We must now clear up an apparent contradiction.

It may be generally supposed that as long as progress in the attack continues, there must still be a preponderance; and, that as the defensive, which will commence at the end of the victorious career, is a stronger form of War than the offensive, therefore, there is so much the less danger of becoming unexpectedly the weaker party. But yet there is, and keeping history in view, we must admit that the greatest danger of a reverse is often just at the moment when the offensive ceases and passes into the defensive. We shall try to find the cause of this.

The superiority which we have attributed to the defensive form of War consists:

(1) In the use of ground.

(2) In the possession of a prepared theatre of War.

(3) In the support of the people.

(4) In the advantage of the state of expectancy.

It must be evident that these principles cannot always be forthcoming and active in a like degree; that, consequently, one defence is not always like another; and therefore, also, that the defence will not always have this same superiority over the offensive. This must be particularly the case in a defensive, which commences after the exhaustion of an offensive, and has its theatre of War usually situated at the apex of an offensive triangle thrust far forward into the country. Of the four principles above named, this defensive only enjoys the first—the use of the ground—undiminished, the second generally vanishes altogether, the third becomes negative, and the fourth is very much reduced. A few more words only, by way of explanation, respecting the last.

If the imagined equilibrium, under the influence of which whole campaigns have often passed without any results, because the side which should assume the initiative is wanting in the necessary resolution—and just therein lies, as we conceive, the advantage of the state of expectancy—if this equilibrium is disturbed by an offensive act, the enemy's interests damaged, and his will stirred up to action, then the probability of his remaining in a state of indolent irresolution is much diminished. A defence, which is organised on conquered territory, has a much more irritating character than one upon our own soil; the offensive principle is engrafted on it in a certain measure, and its nature is thereby weakened. The quiet which Daun allowed Frederick II. in Silesia and Saxony, he would never have granted him in Bohemia.

Thus it is clear that the defensive, which is interwoven or mixed up with an offensive undertaking, is weakened in all its chief principles; and, therefore, will no longer have the preponderance which belongs to it originally.

As no defensive campaign is composed of purely defensive elements, so likewise no offensive campaign is made up entirely of offensive elements; because, besides the short intervals in every campaign, in which both sides are on the defensive, every attack which does not lead to a peace must necessarily end in a defensive.

In this manner it is the defensive itself which contributes to the weakening of the offensive. Thus is so far from being an idle subtlety, that on the contrary, we consider it a chief disadvantage of the attack that we are afterwards reduced through it to a very disadvantageous defensive.

And this explains how the difference which originally exists between the strength of the offensive and defensive forms in War is gradually reduced. We shall now show how it may completely disappear, and the advantage for a short time may change into the reverse.

If we may be allowed to make use of an idea from nature, we shall be able sooner to explain ourselves—the time which every force in the material world requires to show its effect. A power, which if applied slowly by degrees would be sufficient to check a body in motion, will be overcome by it if time fails. This law of the material world is a striking illustration of many of the phenomena in our inner life. If we are once roused to a certain train of thought, it is not every motive sufficient in itself which can change or stop that current of thought. Time, tranquillity and durable impressions on our senses are required. So it is also in War. When once the mind has taken a decided direction towards an object, or turned back towards a harbour of refuge, it may easily happen that the motives which in the one case naturally serve to restrain, and those which in the other as naturally excite to enterprise, are not felt at once in their full force; and as the progress of action in the meantime continues, one is carried along by the stream of movement beyond the line of equilibrium, beyond the culminating point, without being aware of it. Indeed, it may even happen that, in spite of the exhaustion of force, the assailant, supported by the moral forces which specially lie in the offensive, like a horse drawing a load uphill, finds it less difficult to advance than to stop. By this, we believe, we have now shown, without contradiction in itself, how the assailant may pass that point where, if he had stopped at the right moment, he might still, through the defensive, have had a result, that is equilibrium. Rightly, to determine this point is, therefore, important in framing a plan of a campaign, as well for the offensive, that he may not undertake what is beyond his powers (to a certain extent contract debts), as for the defensive, that he may perceive and profit by this error if committed by the assailant.

If now we look back at all the points which the Commander should bear in mind in making his determination, and remember that he can only estimate the tendency and value of the most important of them through the consideration of many other near and distant relations, that he must to a certain extent *guess* at them—guess whether the enemy's Army, after the first blow, will show a stronger core and increasing solidity, or, like a Bologna phial, will turn into dust as soon as the surface is injured; guess the extent of weakness and prostration which the drying up of certain sources, the interruption of certain communications will produce on the military state of the enemy; guess whether the enemy, from the burning pain of the blow which has been dealt him, will collapse powerless, or whether, like a wounded bull, he will rise to a state of fury; lastly, guess whether other powers will be dismayed or roused, what political alliances are likely to be dissolved, and what are likely to be formed. When we say that he must hit all this, and much more, with the tact of his judgment, as the rifleman hits a mark, it must be admitted that such an act of the human mind is no trifle. A thousand wrong roads, running here and there, present themselves to the judgment; and whatever the number, the confusion, and complexity of objects leaves undone, is completed by the sense of danger and responsibility.

Thus it happens that the majority of Generals prefer to fall short of the mark rather than to approach too close; and thus it happens that a fine courage and great spirit of enterprise often go beyond the point, and therefore also fail to hit the mark. Only he that does great things with small means has made a successful hit.

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BOOK VIII

PLAN OF WAR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the chapter on the essence and object of War, we sketched, in a certain measure, its general conception, and pointed out its relations to surrounding circumstances, in order to commence with a sound fundamental idea. We there cast a glance at the manifold difficulties which the mind encounters in the consideration of this subject, whilst we postponed the closer examination of them, and stopped at the conclusion, that the overthrow of the enemy, consequently the destruction of his combatant force, is the chief object of the whole of the action of War. This put us in a position to show in the following chapter, that the means which the act of War employs is the combat alone. In this manner we think we have obtained at the outset a correct point of view.

Having now gone through singly all the principal relations and forms which appear in military action, but are extraneous to, or outside of, the combat, in order that we might fix more distinctly their value, partly through the nature of the thing, partly from the lessons of experience which military history affords, purify them from, and root out, those vague ambiguous ideas which are generally mixed up with them, and also to put prominently forward the real object of the act of War, the destruction of the enemy's combatant force as the primary object universally belonging to it; we now return to War as a whole, as we propose to speak of the Plan of War, and of campaigns; and that obliges us to revert to the ideas in our first book.

In these chapters, which are to deal with the whole question, is contained Strategy, properly speaking, in its most comprehensive and important features. We enter this innermost part of its domain, where all other threads meet, not without a degree of diffidence, which, indeed, is amply justified.

If, on the one hand, we see how extremely simple the operations of War appear; if we hear and read how the greatest Generals speak of it, just in the plainest and briefest manner, how the government and management of this ponderous machine, with its hundred thousand limbs, is made no more of in their lips than if they were only speaking of their own persons, so that the whole tremendous act of War is individualised into a kind of duel; if we find the motives also of their action brought into connection sometimes with a few simple ideas, sometimes with some excitement of feeling; if we see the easy, sure, we might almost say light manner, in which they treat the subject—and now see, on the other hand, the immense number of circumstances which present themselves for the consideration of the mind; the long, often indefinite distances to which the threads of the subject run out and the number

of combinations which lie before us; if we reflect that it is the duty of theory to embrace all this systematically, that is with clearness and fulness, and always to refer the action to the necessity of a sufficient cause, then comes upon us an overpowering dread of being dragged down to a pedantic dogmatism, to crawl about in the lower regions of heavy abstruse conceptions, where we shall never meet any great captain, with his natural *coup d'œil.* If the result of an attempt at theory is to be of this kind, it would have been as well, or rather, it would have been better, not to have made the attempt; it could only bring down on theory the comtempt of genius, and the attempt itself would soon be forgetten. And on the other hand, this facile *coup d'œil* of the General, this simple art of forming notions, this personification of the whole action of War, is so entirely and completely the soul of the right method of conducting War, that in no other but this broad way is it possible to conceive that freedom of the mind which is indispensable if it is to dominate events, not to be overpowered by them.

With some fear we proceed again; we can only do so by pursuing the way which we have prescribed for ourselves from the first. Theory ought to throw a clear light on the mass of objects, that the mind may the easier find its bearings; theory ought to pull up the weeds which error has sown broadcast; it should show the relations of things to each other, separate the important from the trifling. Where ideas resolve themselves spontaneously into such a core of Truth as is called Principle, when they of themselves keep such a line as forms a rule, Theory should indicate the same.

Whatever the mind seizes, the rays of light which are awakened in it by this exploration amongst the fundamental notions of things, *that is the assistance which Theory affords the mind.* Theory can give no formulas with which to solve problems; it cannot confine the mind's course to the narrow line of necessity by Principle set up on both sides. It lets the mind take a look at the mass of objects and their relations, and then allows it to go free to the higher regions of action, there to act according to the measure of its natural forces, with the energy of the whole of those forces combined, and to grasp the *True* and the *Right,* as one single clear idea, which, shooting forth from under the united pressure of all these forces, would seem to be rather a product of feeling than of reflection.

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CHAPTER II

ABSOLUTE AND REAL WAR

The Plan of the War comprehends the whole Military Act; through it that Act becomes a whole, which must have one final determinate object, in which all particular objects must become absorbed. No War is commenced, or, at least, no War should be commenced, if people acted wisely, without first seeking a reply to the question, What is to be attained by and in the same? The first is the final object; the other is the intermediate aim. By this chief consideration the whole course of the War is prescribed, the extent of the means and the measure of energy are determined; its influence manifests itself down to the smallest organ of action.

We said in the first chapter, that the overthrow of the enemy is the natural end of the act of War; and that if we would keep within the strictly philosophical limits of the idea, there can be no other in reality.

As this idea must apply to both the belligerent parties, it must follow, that there can be no suspension in the Military Act, and peace cannot take place until one or other of the parties concerned is overthrown.

In the chapter on the suspension of the Belligerent Act, we have shown how the simple principle of hostility applied to its embodiment, man, and all circumstances out of which it makes a War, is subject to checks and modifications from causes which are inherent in the apparatus of War.

But this modification is not nearly sufficient to carry us from the original conception of War to the concrete form in which it almost everywhere appears. Most Wars appear only as an angry feeling on both sides, under the influence of which, each side takes up arms to protect himself, and to put his adversary in fear, and—when opportunity offers, to strike a blow. They are, therefore, not like mutually destructive elements brought into collison, but like tensions of two elements still apart which discharge themselves in small partial shocks.

But what is now the non-conducting medium which hinders the complete discharge? Why is the philosophical conception not satisfied? That medium consists in the number of interests, forces, and circumstances of various kinds, in the existence of the State, which are affected by the War, and through the infinite ramifications of which the logical consequence cannot be carried out as it would on the simple threads of a few conclusions; in this labyrinth it sticks fast, and man, who in great things as well as in small, usually acts more on the impulse of ideas and feelings, than according to strictly logical conclusions, is hardly conscious of his confusion, unsteadiness of purpose, and inconsistency.

But if the intelligence by which the War is decreed could even go over all these things relating to the War, without for a moment losing sight of its aim, still all the other intelligences in the State which are concerned may not be able to do the same; thus an opposition arises, and with that comes the necessity for a force capable of overcoming the inertia of the whole mass—a force which is seldom forthcoming to the full.

This inconsistency takes place on one or other of the two sides, or it may be on both sides, and becomes the cause of the War being something quite different to what it should be, according to the conception of it—a half-and-half production, a thing without a perfect inner cohesion.

This is how we find it almost everywhere, and we might doubt whether our notion of its absolute character or nature was founded in reality, if we had not seen real warfare make its appearance in this absolute completeness just in our own times. After a short introduction performed by the French Revolution, the impetuous Buonaparte quickly brought it to this point. Under him it was carried on without slackening for a moment until the enemy was prostrated, and the counter stroke followed almost with as little remission. Is it not natural and necessary that this phenomenon should lead us back to the original conception of War with all its rigorous deductions?

Shall we now rest satisfied with this idea, and judge of all Wars according to it, however much they may differ from it—deduce from it all the requirements of theory?

We must decide upon this point, for we can say nothing trustworthy on the Plan of War until we have made up our minds whether War should only be of this kind, or whether it may be of another kind.

If we give an affirmative to the first, then our Theory will be, in all respects, nearer to the necessary, it will be a clearer and more settled thing. But what should we say then of all Wars since those of Alexander up to the time of Buonaparte, if we except some campaigns of the Romans? We should have to reject them in a lump, and yet we cannot, perhaps, do so without being ashamed of our presumption. But an additional evil is, that we must say to ourselves, that in the next ten years there may perhaps be a War of that same kind again, in spite of our Theory; and that this Theory, with a rigorous logic, is still quite powerless against the force of circumstances. We must, therefore, decide to construe War as it is to be, and not from pure conception, but by allowing room for everything of a foreign nature which mixes up with it and fastens itself upon it—all the natural inertia and friction of its parts, the whole of the inconsistency, the vagueness and hesitation (or timidity) of the human mind: we shall have to grasp the idea that War, and the form which we give it, proceeds from ideas, feelings, and circumstances which dominate for the moment; indeed, if we would be perfectly candid we must admit that this has even been the case where it has taken its absolute character, that is, under Buonaparte.

If we must do so, if we must grant that War originates and takes its form not from a final adjustment of the innumerable relations with which it is connected, but from some amongst them which happen to predominate, then it follows, as a matter of

course, that it rests upon a play of possibilities, probabilities, good fortune and bad, in which rigorous logical deduction often gets lost, and in which it is in general a useless, inconvenient instrument for the head; then it also follows that War may be a thing which is sometimes War in a greater, sometimes in a lesser degree.

All this, theory must admit, but it is its duty to give the foremost place to the absolute form of War, and to use that form as a general point of direction, that whoever wishes to learn something from theory, may accustom himself never to lose sight of it, to regard it as the natural measure of all his hopes and fears, in order to approach it *where he can, or where he must.*

That a leading idea, which lies at the root of our thoughts and actions, gives them a certain tone and character, even when the immediately determining grounds come from totally different regions, is just as certain as that the painter can give this or that tone to his picture by the colours with which he lays on his ground.

Theory is indebted to the last Wars for being able to do this effectually now. Without these warning examples of the destructive force of the element set free, she might have talked herself hoarse to no purpose; no one would have believed possible what all have now lived to see realised.

Would Prussia have ventured to penetrate into France in the year 1798 with 70,000 men, if she had foreseen that the reaction in case of failure would be so strong as to overthrow the old balance of power in Europe?

Would Prussia, in 1806, have made War with 100,000 against France, if she had supposed that the first pistol shot would be a spark in the heart of the mine, which would blow it into the air?

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CHAPTER III

A—

INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE PARTS IN WAR

According as we have in view the absolute form of War, or one of the real forms deviating more or less from it, so likewise different notions of its result will arise.

In the absolute form, where everything is the effect of its natural and necessary cause, one thing follows another in rapid succession; there is, if we may use the expression, no neutral space; there is—on account of the manifold reactionary effects which War contains in itself,* on account of the connection in which, strictly speaking, the whole series of combats† follow one after another, on account of the culminating point which every victory has, beyond which losses and defeats commence‡ —on account of all these natural relations of War there is, I say, only *one result,* to wit, the *final result.* Until it takes place nothing is decided, nothing won, nothing lost. Here we may say indeed: the end crowns the work. In this view, therefore, War is an indivisible whole, the parts of which (the subordinate results) have no value except in their relation to this whole. The conquest of Moscow, and of half Russia in 1812, was of no value to Buonaparte unless it obtained for him the peace which he desired. But it was only a part of his Plan of campaign; to complete that Plan, one part was still wanted, the destruction of the Russian Army; if we suppose this, added to the other success, then the peace was as certain as it is possible for things of this kind to be. This second part Buonaparte missed at the right time, and he could never afterwards attain it, and so the whole of the first part was not only useless, but fatal to him.

To this view of the relative connection of results in War, which may be regarded as extreme, stands opposed another extreme, according to which War is composed of single independent results, in which, as in any number of games played, the preceding has no influence on the next following; everything here, therefore, depends only on the sum total of the results, and we can lay up each single one like a counter at play.

Just as the first kind of view derives its truth from the nature of things, so we find that of the second in history. There are cases without number in which a small moderate advantage might have been gained without any very onerous condition being attached to it. The more the element of War is modified the more common these cases become; but as little as the first of the views now imagined was ever completely realised in any War, just as little is there any War in which the last suits in all respects, and the first can be dispensed with.

If we keep to the first of these supposed views, we must perceive the necessity of every War being looked upon as a whole from the very commencement, and that at the very first step forwards, the Commander should have in his eye the object to which every line must converge.

If we admit the second view, then subordinate advantages may be pursued on their own account, and the rest left to subsequent events.

As neither of these forms of conception is entirely without result, therefore theory cannot dispense with either. But it makes this difference in the use of them, that it requires the first to be laid as a fundamental idea at the root of everything, and that the latter shall only be used as a modification which is justified by circumstances.

If Frederick the Great in the years 1742, 1744, 1757, and 1758, thrust out from Silesia and Saxony a fresh offensive point into the Austrian Empire, which he knew very well could not lead to a new and durable conquest like that of Silesia and Saxony, it was done not with a view to the overthrow of the Austrian Empire, but from a lesser motive, namely, to gain time and strength; and it was optional with him to pursue that subordinate object without being afraid that he should thereby risk his whole existence.* But if Prussia in 1806, and Austria in 1805, 1809, proposed to themselves a still more moderate object, that of driving the French over the Rhine, they would not have acted in a reasonable manner if they had not first scanned in their minds the whole series of events which, either in the case of success or of the reverse, would probably follow the first step, and lead up to peace. This was quite indispensable, as well to enable them to determine with themselves how far victory might be followed up without danger, and how and where they would be in a condition to arrest the course of victory on the enemy's side.

An attentive consideration of history shows wherein the difference of the two cases consists. At the time of the Silesian War in the eighteenth century, War was still a mere Cabinet affair, in which the people only took part as a blind instrument; at the beginning of the nineteenth century the people on each side weighed in the scale. The Commanders opposed to Frederick the Great were men who acted on commission, and just on that account men in whom caution was a predominant characteristic; the opponent of the Austrians and Prussians may be described in a few words as the very God of War himself.

Must not these different circumstances give rise to quite different considerations? Should they not in the years 1805, 1806, and 1809 have pointed to the extremity of disaster as a very close possibility, nay, even a very great probability, and should they not at the same time have led to widely different plans and measures from any merely aimed at the conquest of a couple of fortresses or a paltry province?

They did not do so in a degree commensurate with their importance, although both Austria and Prussia, judging by their armaments, felt that storms were brewing in the political atmosphere. They could not do so because those relations at that time were not yet so plainly developed as they have since been from history. It is just those very campaigns of 1805, 1806, 1809, and following ones, which have made it easier for us to form a conception of modern absolute War in its destroying energy.

Theory demands, therefore, that at the commencement of every War its character and main outline shall be defined according to what the political conditions and relations lead us to anticipate as probable. The more that, according to this probability, its

character approaches the form of absolute War; the more its outline embraces the mass of the belligerent States and draws them into the vortex—so much the more complete will be the relation of events to one another and the whole, but so much the more necessary will it also be not to take the first step without thinking what may be the last.

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B—

OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE OBJECT OF THE WAR AND THE EFFORTS TO BE MADE

The compulsion which we must use towards our enemy will be regulated by the proportions of our own and his political demands. In so far as these are mutually known they will give the measure of the mutual efforts; but they are not always quite so evident, and this may be a first ground of a difference in the means adopted by each.

The situation and relations of the States are not like each other; this may become a second cause.

The strength of will, the character and capabilities of the Governments are as little like; this is a third cause.

These three elements cause an uncertainty in the calculation of the amount of resistance to be expected, consequently an uncertainty as to the amount of means to be applied and the object to be chosen.

As in War the want of sufficient exertion may result not only in failure but in positive harm, therefore, the two sides respectively seek to outstrip each other, which produces a reciprocal action.

This might lead to the utmost extremity of exertion, if it were possible to define such a point. But then regard for the amount of the political demands would be lost, the means would lose all relation to the end, and in most cases this aim at an extreme effort would be wrecked by the opposing weight of forces within itself.

In this manner, he who undertakes War is brought back again into a middle course, in which he acts to a certain extent upon the principle of only applying so much force and aiming at such an object in War as is just sufficient for the attainment of its political object. To make this principle practicable he must renounce every absolute necessity of a result, and throw out of the calculation remote contingencies.

Here, therefore, the action of the mind leaves the province of science, strictly speaking, of logic and mathematics, and becomes in the widest sense of the term an *Art,* that is, skill in discriminating, by the tact of judgment among an infinite multitude of objects and relations, that which is the most important and decisive. This tact of judgment consists unquestionably more or less in some intuitive comparison of things and relations by which the remote and unimportant are more quickly set aside, and the more immediate and important are sooner discovered than they could be by strictly logical deduction.

In order to ascertain the real scale of the means which we must put forth for War, we must think over the political object both on our own side and on the enemy's side; we must consider the power and position of the enemy's State as well as of our own, the character of his Government and of his people, and the capacities of both, and all that again on our own side, and the political connections of other States, and the effect which the War will produce on those States. That the determination of these diverse circumstances and their diverse connections with each other is an immense problem, that it is the true flash of genius which discovers here in a moment what is right, and that it would be quite out of the question to become master of the complexity merely by a methodical study, it is easy to conceive.

In this sense Buonaparte was quite right when he said that it would be a problem in algebra before which a Newton might stand aghast.

If the diversity and magnitude of the circumstances and the uncertainty as to the right measure augment in a high degree the difficulty of obtaining a right result, we must not overlook the fact that although the incomparable *importance* of the matter does not increase the complexity and difficulty of the problem, still it very much increases the merit of its solution. In men of an ordinary stamp freedom and activity of mind are depressed, not increased, by the sense of danger and responsibility; but where these things give wings to strengthen the judgment, there undoubtedly must be unusual greatness of soul.

First of all, therefore, we must admit that the judgment on an approaching War, on the end to which it should be directed, and on the means which are required, can only be formed after a full consideration of the whole of the circumstances in connection with it: with which therefore must also be combined the most individual traits of the moment; next, that this decision, like all in military life, cannot be purely objective, but must be determined by the mental and moral qualities of Princes, Statesmen, and Generals, whether they are united in the person of one man or not.

The subject becomes general and more fit to be treated of in the abstract if we look at the general relations in which States have been placed by circumstances at different times. We must allow ourselves here a passing glance at history.

Half-civilised Tartars, the republics of ancient times, the feudal lords and commercial cities of the Middle Ages, kings of the eighteenth century, and, lastly, princes and people of the nineteenth century, all carry on War in their own way, carry it on differently, with different means, and for a different object.

The Tartars seek new abodes. They march out as a nation with their wives and children, they are, therefore, greater than any other Army in point of numbers, and their object is to make the enemy submit or expel him altogether. By these means they would soon overthrow everything before them if a high degree of civilisation could be made compatible with such a condition.

The old republics, with the exception of Rome, were of small extent; still smaller their Armies, for they excluded the great mass of the populace; they were too numerous

and lay too close together not to find an obstacle to great enterprises in the natural equilibrium in which small separate parts always place themselves according to the general law of nature: therefore their Wars were confined to devastating the open country and taking some towns in order to ensure to themselves in these a certain degree of influence for the future.

Rome alone forms an exception, but not until the later period of its history. For a long time, by means of small bands, it carried on the usual warfare with its neighbours for booty and alliances. It became great more through the alliances which it formed, and through which neighbouring peoples by degrees became amalgamated with it into one whole, than through actual conquests. It was only after having spread itself in this manner all over Southern Italy, that it began to advance as a really conquering power. Carthage fell, Spain and Gaul were conquered, Greece subdued, and its dominion extended to Egypt and Asia. At this period its military power was immense, without its efforts being in the same proportion. These forces were kept up by its riches; it no longer resembled the ancient republics, nor itself as it had been; it stands alone.

Just as peculiar in their way are the Wars of Alexander. With a small Army, but distinguished for its intrinsic perfection, he overthrew the decayed fabric of the Asiatic States; without rest, and regardless of risks, he traverses the breadth of Asia, and penetrates into India. No republics could do this. Only a King, in a certain measure his own condottiere, could get through so much so quickly.

The great and small monarchies of the Middle Ages carried on their Wars with feudal levies. Everything was then restricted to a short period of time; whatever could not be done in that time was held to be impracticable. The feudal force itself was raised through an organisation of vassaldom; the bond which held it together was partly legal obligation, partly a voluntary contract; the whole formed a real confederation. The armament and tactics were based on the right of might, on single combat, and therefore little suited to large bodies. In fact, at no period has the union of States been so weak, and the individual citizen so independent. All this influenced the character of the Wars at that period in the most distinct manner. They were comparatively rapidly carried out, there was little time spent idly in camps, but the object was generally only punishing, not subduing the enemy. They carried off his cattle, burnt his towns, and then returned home again.

The great commercial towns and small republics brought forward the condottieri. That was an expensive, and therefore, as far as visible strength, a very limited military force; as for its intensive strength, it was of still less value in that respect; so far from their showing anything like extreme energy or impetuosity in the field, their combats were generally only sham-fights. In a word, hatred and enmity no longer roused a State to personal activity, but had become articles of trade; War lost a great part of its danger, altered completely its nature, and nothing we can say of the character it then assumed would be applicable to it in its reality.

The feudal system condensed itself by degrees into a decided territorial supremacy; the ties binding the State together became closer; obligations which concerned the person were made the subject of composition; by degrees gold became the substitute

in most cases, and the feudal levies were turned into mercenaries. The condottieri formed the connecting-link in the change, and were therefore, for a time, the instrument of the more powerful States; but this had not lasted long when the soldier, hired for a limited term, was turned into a *standing mercenary,* and the military force of States now became an Army, having its base in the public treasury.

It is only natural that the slow advance to this stage caused a diversified interweaving of all three kinds of military force. Under Henry IV. we find the feudal contingents, condottieri, and standing Army all employed together. The condottieri carried on their existence up to the period of the Thirty Years' War, indeed there are some slight traces of them even in the eighteenth century.

The other relations of the States of Europe at these different periods were quite as peculiar as their military forces. Upon the whole this part of the world had split up into a mass of petty States, partly republics in a state of internal dissension, partly small monarchies in which the power of the government was very limited and insecure. A State in either of these cases could not be considered as a real unity; it was rather an agglomeration of loosely connected forces. Neither, therefore, could such a State be considered an intelligent being, acting in accordance with simple logical rules.

It is from this point of view we must look at the foreign politics and Wars of the Middle Ages. Let us only think of the continual expeditions of the Emperors of Germany into Italy for five centuries, without any substantial conquest of that country resulting from them, or even having been so much as in view. It is easy to look upon this as a fault repeated over and over again—as a false view which had its root in the nature of the times, but it is more in accordance with reason to regard it as the consequence of a hundred important causes which we can partially realise in idea, but the vital energy of which it is impossible for us to understand so vividly as those who were brought into actual conflict with them. As long as the great States which have risen out of this chaos required time to consolidate and organise themselves, their whole power and energy is chiefly directed to that point; their foreign Wars are few, and those that took place bear the stamp of a State unity not yet well cemented.

The Wars between France and England are the first that appear, and yet at that time France is not to be considered as really a monarchy, but as an agglomeration of dukedoms and countships; England, although bearing more the semblance of a unity, still fought with the feudal organisation, and was hampered by serious domestic troubles.

Under Louis XI., France made its greatest step towards internal unity; under Charles VIII. it appears in Italy as a power bent on conquest; and under Louis XIV. it had brought its political state and its standing Army to the highest perfection.

Spain attains to unity under Ferdinand the Catholic; through accidental marriage connections, under Charles V. suddenly arose the great Spanish monarchy, composed of Spain, Burgundy, Germany, and Italy united. What this colossus wanted in unity and internal political cohesion, it made up for by gold, and its standing Army came

for the first time into collision with the standing Army of France. After Charles's abdication, the great Spanish colossus split into two parts, Spain and Austria. The latter, strengthened by the acquisition of Bohemia and Hungary, now appears on the scene as a great power, towing the German Confederation like a small vessel behind her.

The end of the seventeenth century, the time of Louis XIV., is to be regarded as the point in history at which the standing military power, such as it existed in the eighteenth century, reached the zenith. That military force was based on enlistment and money. States had organised themselves into complete unities; and the Governments, by commuting the personal obligations of their subjects into a money payment, had concentrated their whole power in their treasuries. Through the rapid strides in social improvements, and a more enlightened system of government, this power had become very great in comparison to what it had been. France appeared in the field with a standing Army of a couple of hundred thousand men, and the other powers in proportion.

The other relations of States had likewise altered. Europe was divided into a dozen kingdoms and two republics; it was now conceivable that two of these powers might fight with each other without ten times as many others being mixed up in the quarrel, as would certainly have been the case formerly. The possible combinations in political relations were still manifold, but they could be discerned and determined from time to time according to probability.

Internal relations had almost everywhere settled down into a pure monarchical form; the rights and influence of privileged bodies or estates had gradually died away, and the Cabinet had become a complete unity, acting for the State in all its external relations. The time had therefore come when a suitable instrument and a despotic will could give War a form in accordance with the theoretical conception.

And at this epoch appeared three new Alexanders—Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., and Frederick the Great, whose aim was, by small but highly disciplined Armies, to raise little States to the rank of great monarchies, and to throw down everything that opposed them. Had they only had to deal with Asiatic States they would have more closely resembled Alexander in the parts they acted. In any case, we may look upon them as the precursors of Buonaparte as respects that which may be risked in War.

But what War gained on the one side in force and consistency was lost again on the other side.

Armies were supported out of the treasury, which the Sovereign regarded partly as his private purse, or at least as a resource belonging to the Government, and not to the people. Relations with other States, except with respect to a few commercial subjects, mostly concerned only the interests of the treasury or of the Government, not those of the people; at least ideas tended everywhere in that way. The Cabinets, therefore, looked upon themselves as the owners and administrators of large estates, which they were continually seeking to increase without the tenants on these estates being particularly interested in this improvement. The people, therefore, who in the Tartar

invasions were everything in War, who, in the old republics, and in the Middle Ages (if we restrict the idea to those possessing the rights of citizens), were of great consequence, were in the eighteenth century absolutely nothing directly, having only still an indirect influence on the War, through their virtues and faults.

In this manner, in proportion as the Government separated itself from the people, and regarded itself as the State, War became more exclusively a business of the Government, which it carried on by means of the money in its coffers and the idle vagabonds it could pick up in its own and neighbouring countries. The consequence of this was, that the means which the Government could command had tolerably well-defined limits, which could be mutually estimated, both as to their extent and duration; this robbed War of its most dangerous feature: namely, the effort towards the extreme, and the hidden series of possibilities connected therewith.

The financial means, the contents of the treasury, the state of credit of the enemy, were approximately known as well as the size of his Army. Any large increase of these at the outbreak of a War was impossible. Inasmuch as the limits of the enemy's power could thus be judged of, a State felt tolerably secure from complete subjugation, and as the State was conscious at the same time of the limits of its own means, it saw itself restricted to a moderate aim. Protected from an extreme, there was no necessity to venture on an extreme. Necessity no longer giving an impulse in that direction, that impulse could only now be given by courage and ambition. But these found a powerful counterpoise in the political relations. Even Kings in command were obliged to use the instrument of War with caution. If the Army was dispersed, no new one could be got, and except the Army there was nothing. This imposed as a necessity great prudence in all undertakings. It was only when a decided advantage seemed to present itself that they made use of the costly instrument; to bring about such an opportunity was a General's art; but until it was brought about they floated to a certain degree in an absolute vacuum, there was no ground of action, and all forces, that is, all designs, seemed to rest. The original motive of the aggressor faded away in prudence and circumspection.

Thus War, in reality, became a regular game in which Time and Chance shuffled the cards; but in its signification it was only diplomacy somewhat intensified, a more vigorous way of negotiating, in which battles and sieges were substituted for diplomatic notes. To obtain some moderate advantage in order to make use of it in negotiations for peace was the aim even of the most ambitious.

This restricted, shrivelled-up form of War proceeded, as we have said, from the narrow basis on which it was supported. But that excellent Generals and Kings, like Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., and Frederick the Great, at the head of Armies just as excellent, could not gain more prominence in the general mass of phenomena—that even these men were obliged to be contented to remain at the ordinary level of moderate results, is to be attributed to the balance of power in Europe. Now that States had become greater, and their centres further apart from each other, what had formerly been done through direct perfectly natural interests, proximity, contact, family connections, personal friendship, to prevent any one single State among the number from becoming suddenly great was effected by a higher cultivation of the art

of diplomacy. Political interests, attractions and repulsions developed into a very refined system, so that a cannon shot could not be fired in Europe without all the Cabinets having some interest in the occurrence.

A new Alexander must therefore try the use of a good pen as well as his good sword; and yet he never went very far with his conquests.

But although Louis XIV. had in view to overthrow the balance of power in Europe, and at the end of the seventeenth century had already got to such a point as to trouble himself little about the general feeling of animosity, he carried on War just as it had heretofore been conducted; for while his Army was certainly that of the greatest and richest monarch in Europe, in its nature it was just like others.

Plundering and devastating the enemy's country, which play such an important part with Tartars, with ancient nations, and even in the Middle Ages, were no longer in accordance with the spirit of the age. They were justly looked upon as unnecessary barbarity, which might easily induce reprisals, and which did more injury to the enemy's subjects than the enemy's Government, therefore, produced no effect beyond throwing the Nation back many stages in all that relates to peaceful arts and civilisation. War, therefore, confined itself more and more, both as regards means and end, to the Army itself. The Army, with its fortresses and some prepared positions, constituted a State in a State, within which the element of War slowly consumed itself. All Europe rejoiced at its taking this direction, and held it to be the necessary consequence of the spirit of progress. Although there lay in this an error, inasmuch as the progress of the human mind can never lead to what is absurd, can never make five out of twice two, as we have already said and must again repeat, still upon the whole this change had a beneficial effect for the people; only it is not to be denied that it had a tendency to make War still more an affair of the State, and to separate it still more from the interests of the people. The plan of a War on the part of the State assuming the offensive in those times consisted generally in the conquest of one or other of the enemy's provinces; the plan of the defender was to prevent this; the particular plan of campaign was to take one or other of the enemy's fortresses, or to prevent one of our own from being taken; it was only when a battle became unavoidable for this purpose that it was sought for and fought. Whoever fought a battle without this unavoidable necessity, from mere innate desire of gaining a victory, was reckoned a General with too much daring. Generally the campaign passed over with one siege, or, if it was a very active one, with two sieges, and winter quarters, which were regarded as a necessity, and during which the faulty arrangements of the one could never be taken advantage of by the other, and in which the mutual relations of the two parties almost entirely ceased, formed a distinct limit to the activity which was considered to belong to one campaign.

If the forces opposed were too much on an equality, or if the aggressor was decidedly the weaker of the two, then neither battle nor siege took place, and the whole of the operations of the campaign pivoted on the maintenance of certain positions and magazines, and the regular exhaustion of particular districts of country.

As long as War was universally conducted in this manner, and the natural limits of its force were so close and obvious, so far from anything absurd being perceived in it, all was considered to be in the most regular order; and criticism, which in the eighteenth century began to turn its attention to the field of art in War, addressed itself to details without troubling itself much about the beginning and the end. Thus there was eminence and perfection of every kind, and even Field-Marshal Daun—to whom it was chiefly owing that Frederick the Great completely attained his object, and that Maria Theresa completely failed in hers—could still pass for a great General. Only now and again a more penetrating judgment made its appearance, that is, sound common sense acknowledged that with superior numbers something positive should be attained or War is badly conducted, whatever art may be displayed.

Thus matters stood when the French Revolution broke out; Austria and Prussia tried their diplomatic Art of War; this very soon proved insufficient. Whilst, according to the usual way of seeing things, all hopes were placed on a very limited military force in 1793, such a force as no one had any conception of made its appearance. War had again suddenly become an affair of the people, and that of a people numbering thirty millions, every one of whom regarded himself as a citizen of the State. Without entering here into the details of circumstances with which this great phenomenon was attended, we shall confine ourselves to the results which interest us at present. By this participation of the people in the War instead of a Cabinet and an Army, a whole Nation with its natural weight came into the scale. Henceforward, the means available—the efforts which might be called forth—had no longer any definite limits; the energy with which the War itself might be conducted had no longer any counterpoise, and consequently the danger for the adversary had risen to the extreme.

If the whole War of the Revolution passed over without all this making itself felt in its full force and becoming quite evident; if the Generals of the Revolution did not persistently press on to the final extreme, and did not overthrow the monarchies in Europe; if the German Armies now and again had the opportunity of resisting with success, and checking for a time the torrent of victory—the cause lay in reality in that technical incompleteness with which the French had to contend, which showed itself first amongst the common soldiers, then in the Generals, lastly, at the time of the Directory, in the Government itself.

After all this was perfected by the hand of Buonaparte, this military power, based on the strength of the whole nation, marched over Europe, smashing everything in pieces so surely and certainly, that where it only encountered the old-fashioned Armies the result was not doubtful for a moment. A reaction, however, awoke in due time. In Spain, the War became of itself an affair of the people. In Austria, in the year 1809, the Government commenced extraordinary efforts, by means of Reserves and Landwehr, which were nearer to the true object, and far surpassed in degree what this State had hitherto conceived possible. In Russia, in 1812, the example of Spain and Austria was taken as a pattern, the enormous dimensions of that Empire on the one hand allowed the preparations, although too long deferred, still to produce effect; and, on the other hand, intensified the effect produced. The result was brilliant. In Germany, Prussia rose up the first, made the War a National Cause, and without either money or credit and with a population reduced one-half, took the field with an Army

twice as strong as that of 1806. The rest of Germany followed the example of Prussia sooner or later, and Austria, although less energetic than in 1809, still came forward with more than its usual strength. Thus it was that Germany and Russia, in the years 1813 and 1814, including all who took an active part in, or were absorbed in these two campaigns, appeared against France with about a million of men.

Under these circumstances, the energy thrown into the conduct of the War was quite different; and, although not quite on a level with that of the French, although at some points timidity was still to be observed, the course of the campaigns, upon the whole, may be said to have been in the new, not in the old, style. In eight months the theatre of War was removed from the Oder to the Seine. Proud Paris had to bow its head for the first time; and the redoubtable Buonaparte lay fettered on the ground.

Therefore, since the time of Buonaparte, War, through being first on one side, then again on the other, an affair of the whole Nation, has assumed quite a new nature, or rather it has approached much nearer to its real nature, to its absolute perfection. The means then called forth had no visible limit, the limit losing itself in the energy and enthusiasm of the Government and its subjects. By the extent of the means and the wide field of possible results, as well as by the powerful excitement of feeling which prevailed, energy in the conduct of War was immensely increased; the object of its action was the downfall of the foe; and not until the enemy lay powerless on the ground was it supposed to be possible to stop or to come to any understanding with respect to the mutual objects of the contest.

Thus, therefore, the element of War, freed from all conventional restrictions, broke loose, with all its natural force. The cause was the participation of the people in this great *affair of State,* and this participation arose partly from the effects of the French Revolution on the internal affairs of countries, partly from the threatening attitude of the French towards all Nations.

Now, whether this will be the case always in future, whether all Wars hereafter in Europe will be carried on with the whole power of the States, and, consequently, will only take place on account of great interests closely affecting the people, or whether a separation of the interests of the Government from those of the people will again gradually arise, would be a difficult point to settle; least of all shall we take it upon ourselves to settle it. But every one will agree with us, that bounds, which to a certain extent existed only in an unconsciousness of what is possible, when once thrown down, are not easily built up again; and that, at least, whenever great interests are in dispute, mutual hostility will discharge itself in the same manner as it has done in our times.

We here bring our historical survey to a close, for it was not our design to give at a gallop some of the principles on which War has been carried on in each age, but only to show how each period has had its own peculiar forms of War, its own restrictive conditions, and its own prejudices. Each period would, therefore, also keep its own theory of War, even if everywhere, in early times as well as in later, the task had been undertaken of working out a theory on philosophical principles. The events in each age must, therefore, be judged of in connection with the peculiarities of the time, and

only he who, less through an anxious study of minute details than through an accurate glance at the whole, can transfer himself into each particular age, is fit to understand and appreciate its Generals.

But this conduct of War, conditioned by the peculiar relations of States and of the military force employed, must still always contain in itself something more general, or rather something quite general, with which, above everything, theory is concerned.

The latest period of past time, in which War reached its absolute strength, contains most of what is of general application and necessary. But it is just as improbable that Wars henceforth will all have this grand character as that the wide barriers which have been opened to them will ever be completely closed again. Therefore, by a theory which only dwells upon this absolute War, all cases in which external influences alter the nature of War would be excluded or condemned as false. This cannot be the object of theory, which ought to be the science of War, not under ideal but under real circumstances. Theory, therefore, whilst casting a searching, discriminating and classifying glance at objects, should always have in view the manifold diversity of causes from which War may proceed, and should, therefore, so trace out its great features as to leave room for what is required by the exigencies of time and the moment.

Accordingly, we must add that the object which every one who undertakes War proposes to himself, and the means which he calls forth, are determined entirely according to the particular details of his position; on that very account they will also bear in themselves the character of the time and of the *general* relations; lastly, *that they are always subject to the general conclusions to be deduced from the nature of War.*

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CHAPTER IV

ENDS IN WAR MORE PRECISELY DEFINED

OVERTHROW OF THE ENEMY

The aim of War in conception must always be the overthrow of the enemy; this is the fundamental idea from which we set out.

Now, what is this overthrow? It does not always imply as necessary the complete conquest of the enemy's country. If the Germans had reached Paris in 1792, there—in all human probability—the War with the Revolutionary party would have been brought to an end at once for a season; it was not at all necessary at that time to beat their Armies beforehand, for those Armies were not yet to be looked upon as potent powers in themselves singly. On the other hand, in 1814, the Allies would not have gained everything by taking Paris if Buonaparte had still remained at the head of a considerable Army; but as his Army had nearly melted away, therefore, both in the years 1814 and 1815, the taking of Paris decided all. If Buonaparte in the year 1812, either before or after taking Moscow, had been able to give the Russian Army of 120,000 on the Kaluga road a complete defeat, such as he gave the Austrians in 1805, and the Prussian Army, 1806, then the possession of that capital would most probably have brought about a peace, although an enormous tract of country still remained to be conquered. In the year 1805 it was the battle of Austerlitz that was decisive; and, therefore, the previous possession of Vienna and two-thirds of the Austrian States was not of sufficient weight to gain for Buonaparte a peace; but, on the other hand also, after that battle of Austerlitz, the integrity of Hungary, still intact, was not of sufficient weight to prevent the conclusion of peace. In the Russian campaign, the complete defeat of the Russian Army was the last blow required: the Emperor Alexander had no other Army at hand, and, therefore, peace was the certain consequence of victory. If the Russian Army had been on the Danube along with the Austrian in 1805, and had shared in its defeat, then probably the conquest of Vienna would not have been necessary, and peace would have been concluded in Linz.

In other cases the complete conquest of a country has not been sufficient, as in the year 1807, in Prussia, when the blow levelled against the Russian auxiliary Army, in the doubtful battle of Eylau, was not decisive enough, and the undoubted victory of Friedland was required as a finishing blow, like the victory of Austerlitz eighteen months before.

We see that here, also, the result cannot be determined from general grounds; the individual causes, which no one knows who is not on the spot, and many of a moral nature which are never heard of, even the smallest traits and accidents, which only appear in history as anecdotes, are often decisive. All that theory can here say is as follows: That the great point is to keep the overruling relations of both parties in view. Out of them a certain centre of gravity, a centre of power and movement, will form

itself, on which everything depends; and against this centre of gravity of the enemy, the concentrated blow of all the forces must be directed.

The little always depends on the great, the unimportant on the important, and the accidental on the essential. This must guide our view.

Alexander had his centre of gravity in his Army, so had Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., and Frederick the Great, and the career of any one of them would soon have been brought to a close by the destruction of his fighting force: in States torn by internal dissensions, this centre generally lies in the capital; in small States dependent on greater ones, it lies generally in the Army of these Allies; in a confederacy, it lies in the unity of interests; in a national insurrection, in the person of the chief leader, and in public opinion; against these points the blow must be directed. If the enemy by this loses his balance, no time must be allowed for him to recover it; the blow must be persistently repeated in the same direction, or, in other words, the conqueror must always direct his blows upon the mass, but not against a fraction of the enemy. It is not by conquering one of the enemy's provinces, with little trouble and superior numbers, and preferring the more secure possession of this unimportant conquest to great results, but by seeking out constantly the heart of the hostile power, and staking everything in order to gain all, that we can effectually strike the enemy to the ground.

But whatever may be the central point of the enemy's power against which we are to direct our operations, still the conquest and destruction of his Army is the surest commencement, and in all cases the most essential.

Hence we think that, according to the majority of ascertained facts, the following circumstances chiefly bring about the overthrow of the enemy:

(1) Dispersion of his Army if it forms, in some degree, a potential force.

(2) Capture of the enemy's capital city, if it is both the centre of the power of the State and the seat of political assemblies and factions.

(3) An effectual blow against the principal Ally, if he is more powerful than the enemy himself.

We have always hitherto supposed the enemy in War as a unity, which is allowable for considerations of a very general nature. But having said that the subjugation of the enemy lies in the overcoming his resistance, concentrated in the centre of gravity, we must lay aside this supposition and introduce the case in which we have to deal with more than one opponent.

If two or more States combine against a third, that combination constitutes, in a political aspect, only *one* War, at the same time this political union has also its degrees.

The question is whether each State in the coalition possesses an independent interest in, and an independent force with which to prosecute, the War; or whether there is one amongst them on whose interests and forces those of the others lean for support. The

more that the last is the case, the easier it is to look upon the different enemies as one alone, and the more readily we can simplify our principal enterprise to one great blow; and as long as this is in any way possible, it is the most thorough and complete means of success.

We may, therefore, establish it as a principle, that if we can conquer all our enemies by conquering one of them, the defeat of that one must be the aim of the War, because in that one we hit the common centre of gravity of the whole War.

There are very few cases in which this kind of conception is not admissible, and where this reduction of several centres of gravity to one cannot be made. But if this cannot be done, then indeed there is no alternative but to look upon the War as two or more separate Wars, each of which has its own aim. As this case supposes the substantive independence of several enemies, consequently a great superiority of the whole, therefore in this case the overthrow of the enemy cannot, in general, come into question.

We now turn more particularly to the question, When is such an object possible and advisable?

In the first place, our forces must be sufficient—

(1) To gain a decisive victory over those of the enemy.

(2) To make the expenditure of force which may be necessary to follow up the victory to a point at which it will no longer be possible for the enemy to regain his balance.

Next, we must feel sure that in our political situation such a result will not excite against us new enemies, who may compel us on the spot to set free our first enemy.

France, in the year 1806, was able completely to conquer Prussia, although in doing so it brought down upon itself the whole military power of Russia, because it was in a condition to cope with the Russians in Prussia.

France might have done the same in Spain in 1808 as far as regards England, but not as regards Austria. It was compelled to weaken itself materially in Spain in 1809, and must have quite given up the contest in that country if it had not had otherwise great superiority, both physically and morally, over Austria.

These three cases should therefore be carefully studied, that we may not lose in the last, the cause which we have gained in the former ones, and be condemned in costs.

In estimating the strength of forces, and that which may be effected by them, the idea very often suggests itself to look upon time by a dynamic analogy as a factor of forces, and to assume accordingly that half efforts, or half the number of forces would accomplish in two years what could only be effected in one year by the whole force united. This view, which lies at the bottom of military schemes, sometimes clearly, sometimes less plainly, is completely wrong.

An operation in War, like everything else upon earth, requires its time; as a matter of course we cannot walk from Wilna to Moscow in eight days; but there is no trace to be found in War of any reciprocal action between time and force, such as takes place in dynamics.

Time is necessary to both belligerents, and the only question is: Which of the two, judging by his position, has most reason to expect *special advantages* from time? Now (exclusive of peculiarities in the situation on one side or the other) the *vanquished* has plainly the most reason, at the same time certainly not by dynamic, but by psychological laws. Envy, jealousy, anxiety for self, as well as now and again magnanimity, are the natural intercessors for the unfortunate; they raise up for him on the one hand friends, and on the other hand weaken and dissolve the coalition amongst his enemies. Therefore, by delay something advantageous is more likely to happen for the conquered than for the conqueror. Further, we must recollect that to make right use of a first victory, as we have already shown, a great expenditure of force is necessary; this is not a mere outlay once for all, but has to be kept up like housekeeping, on a great scale; the forces which have been sufficient to give us possession of a province are not always sufficient to meet this additional outlay; by degrees the strain upon our resources becomes greater, until at last it becomes insupportable; time, therefore, of itself may bring about a change.

Could the contributions which Buonaparte levied from the Russians and Poles, in money and in other ways, in 1812, have procured the hundreds of thousands of men that he must have sent to Moscow in order to retain his position there?

But if the conquered provinces are sufficiently important, if there are in them points which are essential to the well-being of those parts which are not conquered, so that the evil, like a cancer, is perpetually of itself gnawing further into the system, then it is possible that the conqueror, although nothing further is done, may gain more than he loses. Now in this state of circumstances, if no help comes from without, then time may complete the work thus commenced; what still remains unconquered will, perhaps, fall of itself. Thus time may also become a factor of his forces, but this can only take place if a return blow from the conquered is no longer possible, a change of fortune in his favour no longer conceivable, when, therefore, this factor of his forces is no longer of any value to the conqueror; for he has accomplished the chief object, the danger of the culminating point is past, in short, the enemy is already subdued.

Our object in the above reasoning has been to show clearly that no conquest can be finished too soon, that spreading it over a *greater space of time* than is absolutely necessary for its completion, instead of *facilitating* it, makes it more *difficult.* If this assertion is true, it is further true also that if we are strong enough to effect a certain conquest, we must also be strong enough to do it in one march without intermediate stations. Of course we do not mean by this without short halts, in order to concentrate the forces, and make other indispensable arrangements.

By this view, which makes the character of a speedy and persistent effort towards a decision essential to offensive War, we think we have completely set aside all grounds for *that* theory which, in place of the irresistible continued following up of victory,

would substitute a slow methodical system as being more sure and prudent. But even for those who have readily followed us so far, our assertion has, perhaps, after all so much the appearance of a paradox—is at first sight so much opposed and offensive to an opinion which, like an old prejudice, has taken deep root, and has been repeated a thousand times in books—that we considered it advisable to examine more closely the foundation of those plausible arguments which may be advanced.

It is certainly easier to reach an object near us than one at a distance, but when the nearest one does not suit our purpose it does not follow that dividing the work, that a resting-point, will enable us to get over the second half of the road easier. A small jump is easier than a large one, but no one on that account, wishing to cross a wide ditch, would jump half of it first.

If we look closely into the foundation of the conception of the so-called methodical offensive War, we shall find it generally consists of the following things:

(1) Conquest of those fortresses belonging to the enemy which we meet with.

(2) Laying in the necessary supplies.

(3) Fortifying important points, as *magazines, bridges, positions,* &c.

(4) Resting the troops in quarters during winter, or when they require to be recruited in health and refreshed.

(5) Waiting for the reinforcements of the ensuing year.

If for the attainment of all these objects we make a formal division in the course of the offensive action, a resting-point in the movement, it is supposed that we gain a new base and renewed force, as if our own State was following up in the rear of the Army, and that the latter laid in renewed vigour for every fresh campaign.

All these praiseworthy motives may make the offensive War more convenient, but they do not make its results surer, and are generally only make-believes to cover certain counteracting forces, such as the feelings of the Commander or irresolution in the Cabinet. We shall try to roll them up from the left flank.

(1) The waiting for reinforcements suits the enemy just as well, and is, we may say, more to his advantage. Besides, it lies in the nature of the thing that a State can place in line nearly as many combatant forces in one year as in two; for all the actual increase of combatant focre in the second year is but trifling in relation to the whole.

(2) The enemy rests himself at the same time that we do.

(3) The fortification of towns and positions is not the work of the Army, and therefore no ground for any delay.

(4) According to the present system of subsisting Armies, magazines are more necessary when the troops are in cantonments than when they are advancing. As long

as we advance with success, we continually fall into possession of some of the enemy's provision depôts, which assist us when the country itself is poor.

(5) The taking of the enemy's fortresses cannot be regarded as a suspension of the attack: it is an intensified progress, and therefore the seeming suspension which is caused thereby is not properly a case such as we allude to, it is neither a suspension nor a modifying of the use of force. But whether a regular siege, blockade, or a mere observation of one or other is most to the purpose is a question which can only be decided according to particular circumstances. We can only say this in general, that in answering this question another must be clearly decided, which is, whether the risk will not be too great if, while only blockading, we at the same time make a further advance. Where this is not the case, and when there is ample room to extend our forces, it is better to postpone the formal siege till the termination of the whole offensive movement. We must therefore take care not to be led into the error of neglecting the essential, through the idea of immediately making secure that which is conquered.

No doubt it seems as if, by thus advancing, we at once hazard the loss of what has been already gained. Our opinion, however, is that no division of action, no resting-point, no intermediate stations are in accordance with the nature of offensive War, and that when the same are unavoidable, they are to be regarded as an evil which makes the result not more certain, but, on the contrary, more uncertain; and further, that, strictly speaking, if from weakness or any cause we have been obliged to stop, a second spring at the object we have in view is, as a rule, impossible; but if such a second spring is possible, then the stoppage at the intermediate station was unnecessary, and that when an object at the very commencement is beyond our strength, it will always remain so.

We say this appears to be the general truth, by which we only wish to cut aside the idea that time of itself can do something for the advantage of the assailant. But as the political relations may change from year to year, therefore, on that account alone, many cases may happen which are exceptions to this general truth.

It may appear, perhaps, as if we had left our general point of view, and had nothing in our eye except offensive War; but it is not so by any means. Certainly, he who can set before himself the complete overthrow of the enemy as his object will not easily be reduced to take refuge in the defensive, the immediate object of which is only to keep possession; but as we stand by the declaration throughout, that a defensive without any positive principle is a contradiction in strategy as well as in tactics, and therefore always come back to the fact that every defensive, according to its strength, will seek to change to the attack as soon as it has exhausted the advantages of the defensive, so, therefore, however great or small the defence may be, we still also include in it contingently the overthrow of the enemy as an object which this attack may have, and which is to be considered as the proper object of the defensive, and we say that there may be cases in which the assailant, notwithstanding he has in view such a great object, may still prefer at first to make use of the defensive form. That this idea is founded in reality is easily shown by the campaign of 1812. The Emperor Alexander in engaging in the War did not perhaps think of ruining his enemy completely, as was

done in the sequel; but is there anything which makes such an idea impossible? And yet, if so, would it not still remain very natural that the Russians began the War on the defensive?

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CHAPTER V

ENDS IN WAR MORE PRECISELY DEFINED (*Continued*)

LIMITED OBJECT

In the preceding chapter we have said that, under the expression “overthrow of the enemy,” we understand the real absolute aim of the “act of War”; now we shall see what remains to be done when the conditions under which this object might be attained do not exist.

These conditions presuppose a great physical or moral superiority, or a great spirit of enterprise, an innate propensity to extreme hazards. Now where all this is not forthcoming, the aim in the act of War can only be of two kinds; either the conquest of some small or moderate portion of the enemy’s country, or the defence of our own until better times; this last is the usual case in defensive War.

Whether the one or the other of these aims is of the right kind can always be settled by calling to mind the expression used in reference to the last. *The waiting till more favourable times* implies that we have reason to expect such times hereafter, and this waiting for, that is, defensive War, is always based on this prospect; on the other hand, offensive War, that is, the taking advantage of the present moment, is always commanded when the future holds out a better prospect, not to ourselves, but to our adversary.

The third case, which is probably the most common, is when neither party has anything definite to look for from the future, when therefore it furnishes no motive for decision. In this case the offensive War is plainly imperative upon him who is politically the aggressor, that is, who has the positive motive; for he has taken up arms with that object, and every moment of time which is lost without any good reason is so much lost time *for him.*

We have here decided for offensive or defensive War on grounds which have nothing to do with the relative forces of the combatants respectively, and yet it may appear that it would be nearer right to make the choice of the offensive or defensive chiefly dependent on the mutual relations of combatants in point of military strength; our opinion is, that in doing so we should just leave the right road. The logical correctness of our simple argument no one will dispute; we shall now see whether in the concrete case it leads to the contrary.

Let us suppose a small State which is involved in a contest with a very superior power, and foresees that with each year its position will become worse: should it not, if War is inevitable, make use of the time when its situation is furthest from the worst? Then it must attack, not because the attack *in itself* ensures any advantages—it will rather increase the disparity of forces—but because this State is under the

necessity of either bringing the matter completely to an issue before the worst time arrives, or of gaining at least in the meantime some advantages which it may hereafter turn to account. This theory cannot appear absurd. But if this small State is quite certain that the enemy will advance against it, then, certainly, it can and may make use of the defensive against its enemy to procure a first advantage; there is then at any rate no danger of losing time.

If, again, we suppose a small State engaged in War with a greater, and that the future has no influence on their decisions, still, if the small State is politically the assailant, we demand of it also that it should go forward to its object.

If it has had the audacity to propose to itself a positive end in the face of superior numbers, then it must also act, that is, attack the foe, if the latter does not save it the trouble. Waiting would be an absurdity; unless at the moment of execution it has altered its political resolution, a case which very frequently occurs, and contributes in no small degree to give Wars an indefinite character.

These considerations on the limited object apply to its connection both with offensive War and defensive War; we shall consider both in separate chapters. But we shall first turn our attention to another phase.

Hitherto we have deduced the modifications in the object of War solely from intrinsic reasons. The nature of the political view (or design) we have only taken into consideration in so far as it is or is not directed at something positive. Everything else in the political design is in reality something extraneous to War; but in the second chapter of the first book (End and Means in War) we have already admitted that the nature of the political object, the extent of our own or the enemy's demand, and our whole political relation practically have a most decisive influence on the conduct of the War, and we shall therefore devote the following chapter to that subject specially.

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CHAPTER VI

A.—

INFLUENCE OF THE POLITICAL OBJECT ON THE MILITARY OBJECT

We never find that a State joining in the cause of another State takes it up with the same earnestness as its own An auxiliary Army of moderate strength is sent; if it is not successful, then the Ally looks upon the affair as in a manner ended, and tries to get out of it on the cheapest terms possible.

In European politics it has been usual for States to pledge themselves to mutual assistance by an alliance offensive and defensive, not so far that the one takes part in the interests and quarrels of the other, but only so far as to promise one another beforehand the assistance of a fixed, generally very moderate, contingent of troops, without regard to the object of the War or the scale on which it is about to be carried on by the principals. In a treaty of alliance of this kind the Ally does not look upon himself as engaged with the enemy in a War properly speaking, which should necessarily begin with a declaration of War and end with a treaty of peace. Still, this idea also is nowhere fixed with any distinctness, and usage varies one way and another.

The thing would have a kind of consistency, and it would be less embarrassing to the theory of War if this promised contingent of ten, twenty, or thirty thousand men was handed over entirely to the State engaged in War, so that it could be used as required; it might then be regarded as a subsidised force. But the usual practice is widely different. Generally the auxiliary force has its own Commander, who depends only on his own Government, and to whom it prescribes an object such as best suits the shilly-shally measures it has in view.

But even if two States go to War with a third, they do not always both look in like measure upon this common enemy as one that they must destroy or be destroyed by themselves. The business is often settled like a commercial transaction; each, according to the amount of the risk he incurs or the advantage to be expected, takes shares in the concern to the extent of 30,000 or 40,000 men, and acts as if he could not lose more than the amount of his investment.

Not only is this the point of view taken when a State comes to the assistance of another in a cause in which it has, in a manner, little concern, but even when both have a common and very considerable interest at stake nothing can be done except under diplomatic reservation, and the contracting parties usually only agree to furnish a small stipulated contingent, in order to employ the rest of the forces according to the special ends to which policy may happen to lead them.

This way of regarding Wars entered into by reason of alliances was quite general, and was only obliged to give place to the natural way in quite modern times, when the extremity of danger drove men's minds into the natural direction (as in the Wars *against* Buonaparte), and when the most boundless power compelled them to it (as *under* Buonaparte). It was an abnormal thing, an anomaly, for War and Peace are ideas which in their foundation can have no gradations; nevertheless it was no mere diplomatic offspring which the reason could look down upon, but deeply rooted in the natural limitedness and weakness of human nature.

Lastly, even in Wars carried on without Allies, the political cause of a War has a great influence on the method in which it is conducted.

If we only require from the enemy a small sacrifice, then we content ourselves with aiming at a small equivalent by the War, and we expect to attain that by moderate efforts. The enemy reasons in very much the same way. Now, if one or the other finds that he has erred in his reckoning—that in place of being slightly superior to the enemy, as he supposed, he is, if anything, rather weaker, still, at that moment, money and all other means, as well as sufficient moral impulse for greater exertions, are very often deficient: in such a case he just does what is called “the best he can”; hopes better things in the future, although he has not the slightest foundation for such hope, and the War in the meantime drags itself feebly along, like a body worn out with sickness.

Thus it comes to pass that the reciprocal action, the rivalry, the violence and impetuosity of War lose themselves in the stagnation of weak motives, and that both parties move with a certain kind of security in very circumscribed spheres.

If this influence of the political object is once permitted, as it then must be, there is no longer any limit, and we must be pleased to come down to such warfare as consists in a *mere threatening of the enemy* and in *negotiating.*

That the theory of War, if it is to be and to continue a philosophical study, finds itself here in a difficulty is clear. All that is essentially inherent in the conception of War seems to fly from it, and it is in danger of being left without any point of support. But the natural outlet soon shows itself. According as a modifying principle gains influence over the act of War, or rather, the weaker the motives to action become, the more the action will glide into a passive resistance, the less eventful it will become, and the less it will require guiding principles. All military art then changes itself into mere prudence, the principal object of which will be to prevent the trembling balance from suddenly turning to our disadvantage, and the half War from changing into a complete one.

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B.—

WAR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLICY

Having made the requisite examination on both sides of that state of antagonism in which the nature of War stands with relation to other interests of men individually and of the bond of society, in order not to neglect any of the opposing elements—an antagonism which is founded in our own nature, and which, therefore, no philosophy can unravel—we shall now look for that unity into which, in practical life, these antagonistic elements combine themselves by partly neutralising each other. We should have brought forward this unity at the very commencement if it had not been necessary to bring out this contradict on very plainly, and also to look at the different elements separately. Now, this unity is *the conception that War is only a part of political intercourse, therefore by no means an independent thing in itself.*

We know, certainly, that War is only called forth through the political intercourse of Governments and Nations; but in general it is supposed that such intercourse is broken off by War, and that a total y different state of things ensues, subject to no laws but its own.

(We maintain, on the contrary, that War is nothing but a continuation of political intercourse, with a mixture of other means. We say mixed with other means in order thereby to maintain at the same time that this political intercourse does not cease by the War itself, is not changed into something quite different, but that, in its essence, it continues to exist, whatever may be the form of the means which it uses, and that the chief lines on which the events of the War progress, and to which they are attached, are only the general features of policy which run all through the War until peace takes place.) And how can we conceive it to be otherwise? Does the cessation of diplomatic notes stop the political relations between different Nations and Governments? Is not War merely another kind of writing and language for political thoughts? It has certainly a grammar of its own, but its logic is not peculiar to itself.

Accordingly, War can never be separated from political intercourse, and if, in the consideration of the matter, this is done in any way, all the threads of the different relations are, to a certain extent, broken, and we have before us a senseless thing without an object.

This kind of idea would be indispensable even if War was perfect War, the perfectly unbridled element of hostility, for all the circumstances on which it rests, and which determine its leading features, viz., our own power, the enemy's power, Allies on both sides, the characteristics of the people and their Governments respectively, &c., as enumerated in the first chapter of the first book—are they not of a political nature, and are they not so intimately connected with the whole political intercourse that it is impossible to separate them? But this view is doubly indispensable if we reflect that real War is no such consistent effort tending to an extreme, as it should be according

to the abstract idea, but a half-and-half thing, a contradiction in itself; that, as such, it cannot follow its own laws, but must be looked upon as a part of another whole—and this whole is policy.

Policy in making use of War avoids all those rigorous conclusions which proceed from its nature; it troubles itself little about final possibilities, confining its attention to immediate probabilities. If such uncertainty in the whole action ensues therefrom, if it thereby becomes a sort of game, the policy of each Cabinet places its confidence in the belief that in this game it will surpass its neighbour in skill and sharpsightedness.

Thus policy makes out of the all-overpowering element of War a mere instrument, changes the tremendous battle-sword, which should be lifted with both hands and the whole power of the body to strike once for all, into a light handy weapon, which is even sometimes nothing more than a rapier to exchange thrusts and feints and parries.

Thus the contradictions in which man, naturally timid, becomes involved by War may be solved, if we choose to accept this as a solution.

If War belongs to policy, it will naturally take its character from thence. If policy is grand and powerful, so also will be the War, and this may be carried to the point at which War attains to *its absolute form.*

In this way of viewing the subject, therefore, we need not shut out of sight the absolute form of War, we rather keep it continually in view in the background.

Only through this kind of view War recovers unity; only by it can we see all Wars as things of *one* kind; and it is only through it that the judgment can obtain the true and perfect basis and point of view from which great plans may be traced out and determined upon.

It is true the political element does not sink deep into the details of War. Vedettes are not planted, patrols do not make their rounds from political considerations; but small as is its influence in this respect, it is great in the formation of a plan for a whole War, or a campaign, and often even for a battle.

For this reason we were in no hurry to establish this view at the commencement. While engaged with particulars, it would have given us little help, and, on the other hand, would have distracted our attention to a certain extent; in the plan of a War or campaign it is indispensable.

There is, upon the whole, nothing more important in life than to find out the right point of view from which things should be looked at and judged of, and then to keep to that point; for we can only apprehend the mass of events in their unity from *one* standpoint; and it is only the keeping to one point of view that guards us from inconsistency.

If, therefore, in drawing up a plan of a War, it is not allowable to have a two-fold or three-fold point of view, from which things may be looked at, now with the eye of a soldier, then with that of an administrator, and then again with that of a politician,

&c., then the next question is, whether *policy* is necessarily paramount and everything else subordinate to it.

(That policy unites in itself, and reconciles all the interests of internal administrations, even those of humanity, and whatever else are rational subjects of consideration is presupposed, for it is nothing in itself, except a mere representative and exponent of all these interests towards other States. That policy may take a false direction, and may promote unfairly the ambitious ends, the private interests, the vanity of rulers, does not concern us here; for, under no circumstances can the Art of War be regarded as its preceptor, and we can only look at policy here as the representative of the interests ge erally of the whole community.)

The only question, therefore, is whether in framing plans for a War the political point of view should give way to the purely military (if such a point is conceivable), that is to say, should disappear altogether, or subordinate itself to it, or whether the political is to remain the ruling point of view and the military to be considered subordinate to it.

That the political point of view should end completely when War begins is only conceivable in contests which are Wars of life and death, from pure hatred: as Wars are in reality, they are, as we before said, only the expressions or manifestations of policy itself. The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be contrary to common sense, for policy has declared the War; it is the intelligent faculty, War only the instrument, and not the reverse. The subordination of the military point of view to the political is, therefore, the only thing which is possible.

If we reflect on the nature of real War, and call to mind what has been said in the third chapter of this book, *that every War should be viewed above all things according to the probability of its character, and its leading features as they are to be deduced from the political forces and proportions,* and that often—indeed we may safely affirm, in our days, *almost* always—War is to be regarded as an organic whole, from which the single branches are not to be separated, in which therefore every individual activity flows into the whole, and also has its origin in the idea of this whole, then it becomes certain and palpable to us that the superior standpoint for the conduct of the War, from which its leading lines must proceed, can be no other than that of policy.

From this point of view the plans come, as it were, out of a cast; the apprehension of them and the judgment upon them become easier and more natural, our convictions respecting them gain in force, motives are more satisfying, and history more intelligible.

At all events from this point of view there is no longer in the nature of things a necessary conflict between the political and military interests, and where it appears it is therefore to be regarded as imperfect knowledge only. That policy makes demands on the War which it cannot respond to, would be contrary to the supposition that it knows the instrument which it is going to use, therefore, contrary to a natural and indispensable supposition. But if policy judges correctly of the march of military

events, it is entirely its affair to determine what are the events and what the direction of events most favourable to the ultimate and great end of the War.

In one word, the Art of War in its highest point of view is policy, but, no doubt, a policy which fights battles instead of writing notes.

According to this view, to leave a great military enterprise, or the plan for one, to *a purely military judgment and decision* is a distinction which cannot be allowed, and is even prejudicial; indeed, it is an irrational proceeding to consult professional soldiers on the plan of a War, that they may give a *purely military opinion* upon what the Cabinet ought to do; but still more absurd is the demand of Theorists that a statement of the available means of War should be laid before the General, that he may draw out a purely military plan for the War or for a campaign in accordance with those means. Experience in general also teaches us that notwithstanding the multifarious branches and scientific character of military art in the present day, still the leading outlines of a War are always determined by the Cabinet, that is, if we would use technical language, by a political not a military organ.

This is perfectly natural. None of the principal plans which are required for a War can be made without an insight into the political relations; and, in reality, when people speak, as they often do, of the prejudicial influence of policy on the conduct of a War, they say in reality something very different to what they intend. It is not this influence but the policy itself which should be found fault with. If policy is right, that is, if it succeeds in hitting the object, then it can only act with advantage on the War. If this influence of policy causes a divergence from the object, the cause is only to be looked for in a mistaken policy.

It is only when policy promises itself a wrong effect from certain military means and measures, an effect opposed to their nature, that it can exercise a prejudicial effect on War by the course it prescribes. Just as a person in a language with which he is not conversant sometimes says what he does not intend, so policy, when intending right, may often order things which do not tally with its own views.

This has happened times without end, and it shows that a certain knowledge of the nature of War is essential to the management of political intercourse.

But before going further, we must guard ourselves against a false interpretation of which this is very susceptible. We are far from holding the opinion that a War Minister smothered in official papers, a scientific engineer, or even a soldier who has been well tried in the field, would, any of them, necessarily make the best Minister of State where the Sovereign does not act for himself; or, in other words, we do not mean to say that this acquaintance with the nature of War is the principal qualification for a War Minister; elevation, superiority of mind, strength of character, these are the principal qualifications which he must possess; a knowledge of War may be supplied in one way or the other. France was never worse advised in its military and political affairs than by the two brothers Belleisle and the Duke of Choiseul, although all three were good soldiers.

If War is to harmonise entirely with the political views and policy, to accommodate itself to the means available for War, there is only one alternative to be recommended when the statesman and soldier are not combined in one person, which is, to make the Commander-in-Chief a member of the Cabinet, that he may take part in its councils and decisions on important occasions. But then, again, this is only possible when the Cabinet, that is, the Government itself, is near the theatre of War, so that things can be settled without a serious waste of time.

This is what the Emperor of Austria did in 1809, and the allied Sovereigns in 1813, 1814, 1815, and the arrangement proved completely satisfactory.

The influence of any military man except the General-in-Chief in the Cabinet is extremely dangerous; it very seldom leads to able vigorous action. The example of France in 1793, 1794, 1795, when Carnot, while residing in Paris, managed the conduct of the War, is to be avoided, as a system of terror is not at the command of any but a revolutionary government.

We shall now conclude with some reflections derived from history.

In the last decade of the past century, when that remarkable change in the Art of War in Europe took place by which the best Armies found that a part of their method of War had become utterly unserviceable, and events were brought about of a magnitude far beyond what any one had any previous conception of, it certainly appeared that a false calculation of everything was to be laid to the charge of the Art of War. It was plain that while confined by habit within a narrow circle of conceptions, she had been surprised by the force of a new state of relations, lying, no doubt, outside that circle, but still not outside the nature of things.

Those observers who took the most comprehensive view ascribed the circumstance to the general influence which policy had exercised for centuries on the Art of War, and undoubtedly to its very great disadvantage, and by which it had sunk into a half-measure, often into mere sham-fighting. They were right as to fact, but they were wrong in attributing it to something accidental, or which might have been avoided.

Others thought that everything was to be explained by the momentary influence of the particular policy of Austria, Prussia, England, &c., with regard to their own interests respectively.

But is it true that the real surprise by which men's minds were seized was confined to the conduct of War, and did not rather relate to policy itself? That is: Did the ill success proceed from the influence of policy on the War, or from a wrong policy itself?

The prodigious effects of the French Revolution abroad were evidently brought about much less through new methods and views introduced by the French in the conduct of War than through the changes which it wrought in state-craft and civil administration, in the character of Governments, in the condition of the people, &c. That other Governments took a mistaken view of all these things; that they endeavoured, with

their ordinary means, to hold their own against forces of a novel kind and overwhelming in strength—all that was a blunder in policy.

Would it have been possible to perceive and mend this error by a scheme for the War from a purely military point of view? Impossible. For if there had been a philosophical strategist, who merely from the nature of the hostile elements had foreseen all the consequences, and prophesied remote possibilities, still it would have been practically impossible to have turned such wisdom to account.

If policy had risen to a just appreciation of the forces which had sprung up in France, and of the new relations in the political state of Europe, it might have foreseen the consequences which must follow in respect to the great features of War, and it was only in this way that it could arrive at a correct view of the extent of the means required as well as of the best use to make of those means.

We may therefore say, that the twenty years' victories of the Revolution are chiefly to be ascribed to the erroneous policy of the Governments by which it was opposed.

It is true these errors first displayed themselves in the War, and the events of the War completely disappointed the expectations which policy entertained. But this did not take place because policy neglected to consult its military advisers. That Art of War in which the politician of the day could believe, namely, that derived from the reality of War at that time, that which belonged to the policy of the day, that familiar instrument which policy had hitherto used—*that* Art of War, I say, was naturally involved in the error of policy, and therefore could not teach it anything better. It is true that War itself underwent important alterations both in its nature and forms, which brought it nearer to its absolute form; but these changes were not brought about because the French Government had, to a certain extent, delivered itself from the leading-strings of policy; they arose from an altered policy, produced by the French Revolution, not only in France, but over the rest of Europe as well. This policy had called forth other means and other powers, by which it became possible to conduct War with a degree of energy which could not have been thought of otherwise.

Therefore, the actual changes in the Art of War are a consequence of alterations in policy; and, so far from being an argument for the possible separation of the two, they are, on the contrary, very strong evidence of the intimacy of their connection.

Therefore, once more: War is an instrument of policy; it must necessarily bear its character, it must measure with its scale: the conduct of War, in its great features, is therefore policy itself, which takes up the sword in place of the pen, but does not on that account cease to think according to its own laws.

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CHAPTER VII

LIMITED OBJECT—OFFENSIVE WAR

Even if the complete overthrow of the enemy cannot be the object, there may still be one which is directly positive, and this positive object can be nothing else than the conquest of a part of the enemy's country.

The use of such a conquest is this, that we weaken the enemy's resources generally, therefore, of course, his military power, while we increase our own; that we therefore carry on the War, to a certain extent, at his expense; further in this way, that in negotiations for peace, the possession of the enemy's provinces may be regarded as net gain, because we can either keep them or exchange them for other advantages.

This view of a conquest of the enemy's provinces is very natural, and would be open to no objection if it were not that the defensive attitude, which must succeed the offensive, may often cause uneasiness.

In the chapter on the culminating point of victory we have sufficiently explained the manner in which such an offensive weakens the combatant force, and that it may be succeeded by a situation causing anxiety as to the future.

This weakening of our combatant force by the conquest of part of the enemy's territory has its degrees, and these depend chiefly on the geographical position of this portion of territory. The more it is an annex of our own country, being contiguous to or embraced by it, the more it is in the direction of our principal force, by so much the less will it weaken our combatant force. In the Seven Years' War, Saxony was a natural complement of the Prussian theatre of War, and Frederick the Great's Army, instead of being weakened, was strengthened by the possession of that province, because it lies nearer to Silesia than to the Mark, and at the same time covers the latter.

Even in 1742 and 1743, after Frederick the Great had once conquered Silesia, it did not weaken his Army in the field, because, owing to its form and situation as well as the contour of its frontier line, it only presented a narrow point to the Austrians, as long as they were not masters of Saxony, and besides that, this small point of contact also lay in the direction of the chief operations of the contending forces.

If, on the other hand, the conquered territory is a strip running up between hostile provinces and has an eccentric position and unfavourable configuration of ground, then the weakening increases so visibly that a victorious battle becomes not only much easier for the enemy, but it may even become unnecessary as well.

The Austrians have always been obliged to evacuate Provence without a battle when they have made attempts on it from Italy. In the year 1744 the French were very well pleased even to get out of Bohemia without having lost a battle. In 1758 Frederick the

Great could not hold his position in Bohemia and Moravia with the same force with which he had obtained such brilliant successes in Silesia and Saxony in 1757. Examples of Armies not being able to keep possession of conquered territory solely because their combatant force was so much weakened, thereby are so common that it does not appear necessary to quote any more of them.

Therefore, the question whether we should aim at such an object depends on whether we can expect to hold possession of the conquest or whether a temporary occupation (invasion, diversion) would repay the expenditure of force required: especially, whether we have not to apprehend such a vigorous counterstroke as will completely destroy the balance of forces. In the chapter on the culminating point we have treated of the consideration due to this question in each particular case.

There is just one point which we have still to add.

An offensive of this kind will not always compensate us for what we lose upon other points. Whilst we are engaged in making a partial conquest, the enemy may be doing the same at other points, and if our enterprise does not greatly preponderate in importance then it will not compel the enemy to give up his. It is, therefore, a question for serious consideration whether we may not lose more than we gain in a case of this description.

Even if we suppose two provinces (one on each side) to be of equal value, we shall always lose more by the one which the enemy takes from us than we can gain by the one we take, because a number of our forces become to a certain extent like *faux frais,* non-effective. But as the same takes place on the enemy's side also, one would suppose that in reality there is no ground to attach more importance to the maintenance of what is our own than to the conquest. But yet there is. The maintenance of our own territory is always a matter which more deeply concerns us, and the suffering inflicted on our own State cannot be outweighed, nor, to a certain extent, neutralised by what we gain in return, unless the latter promises a much greater percentage.

The consequence of all this is, that a strategic attack directed against only a moderate object involves a greater necessity for steps to defend other points which it does not directly cover than one which is directed against the centre of the enemy's force; consequently, in such an attack the concentration of forces in time and space cannot be carried out to the same extent. In order that it may take place, at least as regards time, it becomes necessary for the advance to be made offensively from every point possible, and at the same moment exactly: and therefore this attack loses the other advantage of being able to make shift with a much smaller force by acting on the defensive at particular points. In this way the effect of aiming at a minor object is to bring all things more to a level: the whole act of the War cannot now be concentrated into one principal affair which can be governed according to leading points of view; it is more dispersed; the friction becomes greater everywhere, and there is everywhere more room for chance.

This is the natural tendency of the thing. The Commander is weighed down by it, finds himself more and more neutralised. The more he is conscious of his own powers, the greater his resources subjectively, and his power objectively, so much the more he will seek to liberate himself from this tendency in order to give to some one point a preponderating importance, even if that should only be possible by running greater risks.

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CHAPTER VIII

LIMITED OBJECT—DEFENCE

The ultimate aim of defensive War can never be an absolute negation, as we have before observed. Even for the weakest there must be some point in which the enemy may be made to feel, and which may be threatened.

Certainly we may say that this object is the exhaustion of the adversary, for as he has a positive object, every one of his blows which fails, if it has no other result than the loss of the force applied, still may be considered a retrograde step *in reality,* whilst the loss which the defensive suffers is not in vain, because his object was keeping possession, and that he has effected. This would be tantamount to saying that the defensive has his positive object in merely keeping possession. Such reasoning might be good if it was certain that the assailant after a certain number of fruitless attempts must be worn out, and desist from further efforts. But just this necessary consequence is wanting. If we look at the exhaustion of forces, the defender is under a disadvantage. The assailant becomes weaker, but only in the sense that it may reach a turning point; if we set aside that supposition, the weakening goes on certainly more rapidly on the defensive side than on that of the assailant: for in the first place, he is the weaker, and, therefore, if the losses on both sides are equal, he loses more actually than the other; in the next place, he is deprived generally of a portion of territory and of his resources. We have here, therefore, no ground on which to build the expectation that the offensive will cease, and nothing remains but the idea that if the assailant repeats his blows, while the defensive does nothing but wait to ward them off, then the defender has no counterpoise as a set-off to the risk he runs of one of these attacks succeeding sooner or later.

Although in reality the exhaustion, or rather the weakening of the stronger, has brought about a peace in many instances that is to be attributed to the indecision which is so general in War, but cannot be imagined philosophically as the general and ultimate object of any defensive War whatever, there is, therefore, no alternative but that the defence should find its object in the idea of the "*waiting for,*" which is besides its real character. This idea in itself includes that of an alteration of circumstances, of an improvement of the situation, which, therefore, when it cannot be brought about by internal means, that is, by defensive pure in itself, can only be expected through assistance coming from without. Now, this improvement from without can proceed from nothing else than a change in political relations; either new alliances spring up in favour of the defender, or old ones directed against him fall to pieces.

Here, then, is the object for the defender, in case his weakness does not permit him to think of any important counterstroke. But this is not the nature of every defensive War, according to the conception which we have given of its form. According to that conception it is the stronger form of War, and on account of that strength it can also be applied when a counterstroke more or less important is designed.

These two cases must be kept distinct from the very first, as they have an influence on the defence.

In the first case, the defender's object is to keep possession of his own country as long as possible, because in that way he gains most time; and gaining time is the only way to attain his object. The positive object which he can in most cases attain, and which will give him an opportunity of carrying out his object in the negotiations for peace, he cannot yet include in his plan for the War. In this state of strategic passiveness, the advantages which the defender can gain at certain points consist in merely repelling partial attacks; the preponderance gained at those points he tries to make of service to him at others, for he is generally hard pressed at all points. If he has not the opportunity of doing this, then there often only accrues to him the small advantage that the enemy will leave him at rest for a time.

If the defender is not altogether too weak, small offensive operations directed less towards permanent possession than a temporary advantage to cover losses, which may be sustained afterwards, invasions, diversions, or enterprises against a single fortress, may have a place in this defensive system without altering its object or essence.

But in the second case, in which a positive object is already grafted upon the defensive, the greater the counterstroke that is warranted by circumstances the more the defensive imports into itself of a positive character. In other words, the more the defence has been adopted voluntarily, in order to make the first blow surer, the bolder may be the snares which the defender lays for his opponent. The boldest, and if it succeeds, the most effectual, is the retreat into the interior of the country; and this means is then at the same time that which differs most widely from the other system.

Let us only think of the difference between the position in which Frederick the Great was placed in the Seven Years' War, and that of Russia in 1812.

When the War began, Frederick, through his advanced state of preparation for War, had a kind of superiority; this gave him the advantage of being able to make himself master of Saxony, which was besides such a natural complement of his theatre of War that the possession of it did not diminish, but increased his combatant force.

At the opening of the campaign of 1757, the King endeavoured to proceed with his strategic attack, which seemed not impossible as long as the Russians and French had not yet reached the theatre of War in Silesia, the Mark and Saxony. But the attack miscarried, and Frederick was thrown back on the defensive for the rest of the campaign, was obliged to evacuate Bohemia and to rescue his own theatre from the enemy, in which he only succeeded by turning himself with one and the same Army, first upon the French, and then upon the Austrians. This advantage he owed entirely to the defensive.

In the year 1758, when his enemies had drawn round him in a closer circle, and his forces were dwindling down to a very disproportionate relation, he determined on an offensive on a small scale in Moravia; his plan was to take Olmütz before his enemies were prepared; not in the expectation of keeping possession of, or of making it a base

for further advance, but to use it as a sort of advanced work, a *counter-approach* against the Austrians, who would be obliged to devote the rest of the present campaign, and perhaps even a second, to recover possession of it. This attack also miscarried. Frederick then gave up all idea of a real offensive, as he saw that it only increased the disproportion of his Army. A compact position in the heart of his own country in Saxony and Silesia, the use of short lines, that he might be able rapidly to increase his forces at any point which might be menaced, a battle when unavoidable, small incursions when opportunity offered, and along with this a patient state of waiting-for (expectation), a saving of his means for better times became now his general plan. By degrees the execution of it became more and more passive. As he saw that even a victory cost him too much, he tried to manage at still less expense; everything depended on gaining time and on keeping what he had got; he therefore became more tenacious of yielding any ground, and did not hesitate to adopt a perfect cordon system. The positions of Prince Henry in Saxony, as well as those of the King in the Silesian mountains, may be so termed, In his letters to the Marquis d'Argens, he manifests the impatience with which he looks forward to winter quarters and the satisfaction he felt at being able to take them up again without having suffered any serious loss.

Whoever blames Frederick for this, and looks upon it as a sign that his spirit had sunk, would, we think, pass judgment without much reflection.

If the entrenched camp at Bunzelwitz, the positions taken up by Prince Henry in Saxony, and by the King in the Silesian mountains, do not appear to us now as measures on which a General should place his dependence in a last extremity because a Buonaparte would soon have thrust his sword through such tactical cobwebs, we must not forget that times have changed, that War has become a totally different thing, is quickened with new energies, and that therefore positions might have been excellent at that time, although they are not so now, and that in addition to all, the character of the enemy deserves attention. Against the Army of the German States, against Daun and Butturlin, it might have been the height of wisdom to employ means which Frederick would have despised if used against himself.

The result justified this view: in the state of patient expectation, Frederick attained his object, and evaded difficulties in a collision with which his forces would have been dashed to pieces.

The relation in point of numbers between the Russian and French Armies opposed to each other at the opening of the campaign in 1812 was still more unfavourable to the former than that between Frederick and his enemies in the Seven Years' War. But the Russians looked forward to being joined by large reinforcements in the course of the campaign. All Europe was in secret hostility to Buonaparte, his power had been screwed up to the highest point, a devouring War occupied him in Spain, and the vast extent of Russia allowed of pushing the exhaustion of the enemy's military means to the utmost extremity by a retreat over five hundred miles of country. Under circumstances on this grand scale, a tremendous counterstroke was not only to be expected if the French enterprise failed (and how could it succeed if the Russian Emperor would not make peace, or his subjects did not rise in insurrection?), but this

counterstroke might also end in the complete destruction of the enemy. The most profound sagacity could, therefore, not have devised a better plan of campaign than that which the Russians followed on the spur of the moment.

That this was not the opinion at the time, and that such a view would then have been looked upon as preposterous, is no reason for our now denying it to be the right one. If we are to learn from history, we must look upon things which have actually happened as also possible in the future, and that the series of great events which succeeded the march upon Moscow is not a succession of mere accidents every one will grant who can claim to give an opinion on such subjects. If it had been possible for the Russians, with great efforts, to defend their frontier, it is certainly probable that in such case also the French power would have sunk, and that they would have at last suffered a reverse of fortune; but the reaction then would certainly not have been so violent and decisive. By sufferings and sacrifices (which certainly in any other country would have been greater, and in most cases would have been impossible) Russia purchased this enormous success.

Thus a great positive success can never be obtained except through positive measures, planned not with a view to a mere state of "waiting-for," but with a view to a *decision,* in short, even on the defensive, there is no great gain to be won except by a great stake.

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CHAPTER IX

PLAN OF WAR WHEN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY IS THE OBJECT

Having characterised in detail the different aims to which War may be directed, we shall go through the organisation of War as a whole for each of the three separate gradations corresponding to these aims.

In conformity with all that has been said on the subject up to the present, two fundamental principles reign throughout the whole plan of the War, and serve as a guide for everything else.

The first is: to reduce the weight of the enemy's power into as few centres of gravity as possible, into one if it can be done; again, to confine the attack against these centres of force to as few principal undertakings as possible, to one if possible; lastly, to keep all secondary undertakings as subordinate as possible. In a word, the first principle is, *to concentrate as much as possible.*

The second principle runs thus—*to act as swiftly as possible;* therefore, to allow of no delay or detour without sufficient reason.

The reducing the enemy's power to one central point depends—

(1) On the nature of its political connection. If it consists of Armies of one Power, there is generally no difficulty; if of allied Armies, of which one is acting simply as an ally without any interest of its own, then the difficulty is not much greater; if of a coalition for a common object, then it depends on the cordiality of the alliance; we have already treated of this subject.

(2) On the situation of the theatre of War upon which the different hostile Armies make their appearance.

If the enemy's forces are collected in one Army upon one theatre of War, they constitute in reality a unity, and we need not inquire further; if they are upon one theatre of War, but in separate Armies, which belong to different Powers, there is no longer absolute unity; there is, however, a sufficient interdependence of parts for a decisive blow upon *one part* to throw down the other in the concussion. If the Armies are posted in theatres of War adjoining each other, and not separated by any great natural obstacles, then there is in such case also a decided influence of the one upon the other; but if the theatres of War are wide apart, if there is neutral territory, great mountains, &c., intervening between them, then the influence is very doubtful and improbable as well; if they are on quite opposite sides of the State against which the War is made, so that operations directed against them must diverge on eccentric lines, then almost every trace of connection is at an end.

If Prussia was attacked by France and Russia at the same time, it would be as respects the conduct of the War much the same as if there were two separate Wars; at the same time the unity would appear in the negotiations.

Saxony and Austria, on the contrary, as military powers in the Seven Years' War, were to be regarded as one; what the one suffered the other felt also, partly because the theatres of War lay in the same direction for Frederick the Great, partly because Saxony had no political independence.

Numerous as were the enemies of Buonaparte in Germany in 1813, still they all stood very much in one direction in respect to him, and the theatres of War for their Armies were in close connection, and reciprocally influenced each other very powerfully. If by a concentration of all his forces he had been able to overpower the main Army, such a defeat would have had a decisive effect on all the parts. If he had beaten the Bohemian Grand Army, and marched upon Vienna by Prague, Blücher, however willing, could not have remained in Saxony, because he would have been called upon to cooperate in Bohemia, and the Crown Prince of Sweden as well would have been unwilling to remain in the Mark.

On the other hand, Austria, if carrying on War against the French on the Rhine and Italy at the same time, will always find it difficult to give a decision upon one of those theatres by means of a successful stroke on the other. Partly because Switzerland, with its mountains, forms too strong a barrier between the two theatres, and partly because the direction of the roads on each side is divergent. France, again, can much sooner decide in the one by a successful result in the other, because the direction of its forces in both converges upon Vienna, the centre of the power of the whole Austrian empire; we may add further, that a decisive blow in Italy will have more effect on the Rhine theatre than a success on the Rhine would have in Italy, because the blow from Italy strikes nearer to the centre, and that from the Rhine more upon the flank, of the Austrian dominions.

It proceeds from what we have said that the conception of separated or connected hostile power extends through all degrees of relationship, and that therefore, in each case, the first thing is to discover the influence which events in one theatre may have upon the other, according to which we may afterwards settle how far the different forces of the enemy may be reduced into one centre of force.

There is only one exception to the principle of directing all our strength against the centre of gravity of the enemy's power, that is, if ancillary expeditions promise *extraordinary advantages,* and still, in this case, it is a condition assumed, that we have such a decisive superiority as enables us to undertake such enterprises without incurring too great risk at the point which forms our great object.

When General Bülow marched into Holland in 1814, it was to be foreseen that the thirty thousand men composing his corps would not only neutralise the same number of Frenchmen, but would, besides, give the English and the Dutch an opportunity of entering the field with forces which otherwise would never have been brought into activity.

Thus, therefore, the first consideration in the combination of a plan for a War is to determine the centres of gravity of the enemy's power, and, if possible, to reduce them to one. The second is to unite the forces which are to be employed against the centre of force into one great action.

Here now the following grounds for dividing our forces may present themselves:

(1) The original position of the military forces, therefore also the situation of the States engaged in the offensive.

If the concentration of the forces would occasion detours and loss of time, and the danger of advancing by separate lines is not too great, then the same may be justifiable on those grounds; for to effect an unnecessary concentration of forces, with great loss of time, by which the freshness and rapidity of the first blow is diminished, would be contrary to the second leading principle we have laid down. In all cases in which there is a hope of surprising the enemy in some measure, this deserves particular attention.

But the case becomes still more important if the attack is undertaken by allied States which are not situated on a line directed towards the State attacked—not one behind the other—but situated side by side. If Prussia and Austria undertook a War against France, it would be a very erroneous measure, a squandering of time and force if the Armies of the two Powers were obliged to set out from the same point, as the natural line for an Army operating from Prussia against the heart of France is from the lower Rhine, and that of the Austrians is from the Upper Rhine. Concentration, therefore, in this case, could only be effected by a sacrifice; consequently, in any particular instance, the question to be decided would be, Is the necessity for concentration so great that this sacrifice must be made?

(2) The attack by separate lines may offer greater results.

As we are now speaking of advancing by separate lines against *one* centre of force, we are therefore, supposing an advance by *converging lines.* A separate advance on parallel or eccentric lines belongs to the rubric of *accessory undertakings,* of which we have already spoken.

Now, every convergent attack in Strategy, as well as in tactics, holds out the prospect of *great* results; for if it succeeds, the consequence is not simply a defeat, but more or less the cutting off of the enemy. The concentric attack, is therefore, always that which may lead to the greatest results; but on account of the separation of the parts of the force, and the enlargement of the theatre of War, it involves also the most risk; it is the same here as with attack and defence, the weaker form holds out the greater results in prospect.

The question therefore is, whether the assailant feels strong enough to try for this great result.

When Frederick the Great advanced upon Bohemia, in the year 1757, he set out from Saxony and Silesia with his forces divided. The two principal reasons for his doing so

were, first, that his forces were so cantoned in the winter that a concentration of them at one point would have divested the attack of all the advantages of a surprise; and next, that by this concentric advance, each of the two Austrian theatres of War was threatened in the flanks and the rear. The danger to which Frederick the Great exposed himself on that occasion was that one of his two Armies might have been completely defeated by superior forces; should the Austrians *not see this,* then they would have to give battle with their centre only, or run the risk of being thrown off their line of communication, either on one side or the other, and meeting with a catastrophe; this was the great result which the King hoped for by this advance. The Austrians preferred the battle in the centre, but Prague, where they took up their position, was in a situation too much under the influence of the convergent attack, which, as they remained perfectly passive in their position, had time to develop its efficacy to the utmost. The consequence of this was that when they lost the battle, it was a complete catastrophe; as is manifest from the fact that two-thirds of the Army with the Commander-in-Chief were obliged to shut themselves up in Prague.

This brilliant success at the opening of the campaign was attained by the bold stroke with a concentric attack. If Frederick considered the precision of his own movements, the energy of his Generals, the moral superiority of his troops, on the one side, and the sluggishness of the Austrians on the other, as sufficient to ensure the success of his plan, who can blame him? But as we cannot leave these moral advantages out of consideration, neither can we ascribe the success solely to the mere geometrical form of the attack. Let us only think of the no less brilliant campaign of Buonaparte, in the year 1796, when the Austrians were so severely punished for their concentric march into Italy. The means which the French General had at command on that occasion, the Austrian General had also at his disposal in 1757 (with the exception of the moral), indeed, he had rather more, for he was not, like Buonaparte, weaker than his adversary. Therefore, when it is to be apprehended that the advance on separate converging lines may afford the enemy the means of counteracting the inequality of numerical forces by using interior lines, such a form of attack is not advisable; and if on account of the situation of the belligerents it must be resorted to, it can only be regarded as a necessary evil.

If, from this point of view, we cast our eyes on the plan which was adopted for the invasion of France in 1814, it is impossible to give it approval. The Russian, Austrian, and Prussian Armies were concentrated at a point near Frankfort-on-the-Maine, on the most natural and most direct line to the centre of the force of the French monarchy. These Armies were then separated, that one might penetrate into France from Mayence, the other from Switzerland. As the enemy’s force was so reduced that a defence of the frontier was out of the question, the whole advantage to be expected from this concentric advance, if it succeeded, was that while Lorraine and Alsace were conquered by one Army, Franche-Comté would be taken by the other. Was this trifling advantage worth the trouble of marching into Switzerland? We know very well that there were other (but just as insufficient) grounds which caused this march; but we confine ourselves here to the point which we are considering.

On the other side, Buonaparte was a man who thoroughly understood the defensive to oppose to a concentric attack, as he had already shown in his masterly campaign of

1796; and although the Allies were very considerably superior in numbers, yet the preponderance due to his superiority as a General was on all occasions acknowledged. He joined his Army too late near Châlons, and looked down rather too much, generally, on his opponents, still he was very near hitting the two Armies separately; and what was the state he found them in at Brienne? Blücher had only 27,000 of his 65,000 men with him, and the Great Army, out of 200,000, had only 100,000 present. It was impossible to make a better game for the adversary. And from the moment that active work began, no greater want was felt than that of reunion.

After all these reflections, we think that although the concentric attack is in itself a means of obtaining greater results, still it should generally only proceed from a previous separation of the parts composing the whole force, and that there are few cases in which we should do right in giving up the shortest and most direct line of operation for the sake of adopting that form.

(3) The breadth of a theatre of War can be a motive for attacking on separate lines.

If an Army on the offensive in its advance from any point penetrates with success to some distance into the interior of the enemy's country, then, certainly, the space which it commands is not restricted exactly to the line of road by which it marches, it will command a margin on each side; still that will depend very much, if we may use the figure, on the solidity and cohesion of the opposing State. If the State only hangs loosely together, if its people are an effeminate race unaccustomed to War, then, without our taking much trouble, a considerable extent of country will open behind our victorious Army; but if we have to deal with a brave and loyal population, the space behind our Army will form a triangle, more or less acute.

In order to obviate this evil, the attacking force requires to regulate its advance on a certain width of front. If the enemy's force is concentrated at a particular point, this breadth of front can only be preserved so long as we are not in contact with the enemy, and must be contracted as we approach his position: that is easy to understand.

But if the enemy himself has taken up a position with a certain extent of front, then there is nothing absurd in a corresponding extension on our part. We speak here of one theatre of War, or of several, if they are quite close to each other. Obviously this is, therefore, the case when, according to our view, the chief operation is, at the same time, to be decisive on subordinate points.

But now, can we *always* run the chance of this? And may we expose ourselves to the danger which must arise if the influence of the chief operation is not sufficient to decide at the minor points? Does not the want of a certain breadth for a theatre of War deserve special consideration?

Here as well as everywhere else it is impossible to exhaust the number of combinations which *may take* place; but we maintain that, with few exceptions, the decision on the capital point will carry with it the decision on all minor points. Therefore, the action should be regulated in conformity with this principle, in all cases in which the contrary is not evident.

When Buonaparte invaded Russia, he had good reason to believe that by conquering the main body of the Russian Army he would compel their forces on the Upper Dwina to succumb. He left at first only the Corps of Oudinot to oppose them, but Wittgenstein assumed the offensive, and Buonaparte was then obliged to send also the sixth Corps to that quarter.

On the other hand, at the beginning of the campaign, he directed a part of his forces against Bagration; but that General was carried along by the influence of the backward movement in the centre, and Buonaparte was enabled then to recall that part of his forces. If Wittgenstein had not had to cover the second capital he would also have followed the retreat of the Great Army under Barclay.

In the years 1805 and 1809, Buonaparte's victories at Ulm and Ratisbon decided matters in Italy and also in the Tyrol although the first was rather a distant theatre, and an independent one in itself. In the year 1806, his victories at Jena and Auerstadt were decisive in respect to everything that might have been attempted against him in Westphalia and Hesse, or on the Frankfort road.

Amongst the number of circumstances which may have an influence on the resistance at secondary points, there are two which are the most prominent.

The first is: that in a country of vast extent, and also relatively of great power, like Russia, we can put off the decisive blow at the chief point for some time, and are not obliged to do all in a hurry.

The second is: when a minor point (like Silesia in the year 1806), through a great number of fortresses, possesses an extraordinary degree of independent strength. Yet Buonaparte treated that point with great contempt, inasmuch as, when he had to leave such a point completely in his rear on the march to Warsaw, he only detached 20,000 men under his brother Jerome to that quarter.

If it happens that the blow at the capital point, in all probability, will not shake such a secondary point, or has not done so, and if the enemy has still forces at that point, then to these—as a necessary evil—an adequate force must be opposed, because no one can absolutely lay oper his line of communication from the very commencement.

But prudence may go a step further; it may require that the advance upon the chief point shall keep pace with that on the secondary points, and consequently the principal undertaking must be delayed whenever the secondary points will not succumb.

This principle does not directly contradict ours as to uniting all action as far as possible in one great undertaking, but the spirit from which it springs is diametrically opposed to the spirit in which ours is conceived. By following such a principle there would be such a measured pace in the movements, such a paralysation of the impulsive force, such room for the freak of chance, and such a loss of time, as would be practically perfectly inconsistent with an offensive directed to the complete overthrow of the enemy.

The difficulty becomes still greater if the forces stationed at these minor points can retire on divergent lines.—What would then become of the unity of our attack?

We must, therefore, declare ourselves completely opposed in principle to the dependence of the chief attack on minor attacks, and we maintain that an attack directed to the destruction of the enemy which has not the boldness to shoot, like the point of an arrow, direct at the heart of the enemy's power, can never hit the mark.

(4) Lastly, there is still a fourth ground for a separate advance in the facility which it may afford for subsistence.

It is certainly much pleasanter to march with a small Army through an opulent country, than with a large Army through a poor one; but by suitable measures and with an Army accustomed to privations, the latter is not impossible, and, therefore, the first should never have such an influence on our plans as to lead us into a great danger.

We have now done justice to the grounds for a separation of forces which divides the chief operation into several, and if the separation takes place on any of these grounds, with a distinct conception of the object, and after due consideration of the advantages and disadvantages, we shall not venture to find fault.

But if, as usually happens, a plan is drawn out by a learned General Staff, merely according to routine; if different theatres of war, like the squares on a chessboard, must each have its piece first placed on it before the moves begin, if these moves approach the aim in complicated lines and relations by dint of an imaginary profundity in the art of combination, if the Armies are to separate to-day in order to apply all their skill in reuniting at the greatest risk in fourteen days—then we have a perfect horror of this abandonment of the direct, simple, common-sense road to rush intentionally into absolute confusion. This folly happens more easily the less the General-in-Chief directs the War, and conducts it in the sense which we have pointed out in the first chapter as an act of his individuality invested with extraordinary powers; the more, therefore, the whole plan is manufactured by an inexperienced Staff, and from the ideas of a dozen smatterers.

We have still now to consider the third part of our first principle; that is, to keep the subordinate parts as much as possible in subordination.

Whilst we endeavour to refer the whole of the operations of a War to one single aim, and try to attain this as far as possible by *one great effort,* we deprive the other points of contact of the States at War with each other of a part of their independence; they become subordinate actions. If we could concentrate everything absolutely into one action, then those points of contact would be completely neutralised; but this is seldom possible, and, therefore, what we have to do is to keep them so far within bounds, that they shall not cause the abstraction of too many forces from the main action.

Next, we maintain that the plan of the War itself should have this tendency, even if it is not possible to reduce the whole of the enemy's resistance to one point; consequently in case we are placed in the position already mentioned. of carrying on two almost quite separate Wars at the same time, the one must always be looked upon as the *principal affair* to which our forces and activity are to be chiefly devoted.

In this view, it is advisable only to proceed *offensively* against that one principal point, and to preserve the defensive upon all the others. The attack there being only justifiable when invited by very exceptional circumstances.

Further, we are to carry on this defensive, which takes place at minor points, with as few troops as possible, and to seek to avail ourselves of every advantage which the defensive form can give.

This view applies with still more force to all theatres of War on which Armies come forward belonging to different powers really, but still such as will be struck when the general centre of force is struck.

But against *the enemy* at whom the great blow is aimed, there must be, according to this, no defensive on minor theatres of War. The chief attack itself, and the secondary attacks, which for other reasons are combined with it, make up this blow, and make every defensive, on points not directly covered by it, superfluous. All depends on this principal attack; by it every loss will be compensated. If the forces are sufficient to make it reasonable to seek for that great decision, then the *possibility of failure* can be no ground for guarding oneself against injury at other points in any event; for just by *such a course* this failure will become more probable, and it therefore constitutes here a contradiction in our action.

This same predominance of the principal action over the minor must be the principle observed in each of the separate branches of the attack. But as there are generally ulterior motives which determine what forces shall advance from one theatre of War and what from another against the common centre of the enemy's power, we only mean here that there must be an *effort to make the chief action overruling,* for everything will become simpler and less subject to the influence of chance events the nearer this state of preponderance can be attained.

The second principle concerns the rapid use of the forces.

Every unnecessary expenditure of time, every unnecessary *détour,* is a waste of power, and therefore contrary to the principles of Strategy.

It is most important always to bear in mind that almost the only advantage which the offensive possesses is the effect of surprise at the opening of the scene. Suddenness and irresistible impetuosity are its strongest pinions; and when the object is the complete overthrow of the enemy, it can rarely dispense with them.

By this, therefore, theory demands the shortest way to the object, and completely excludes from consideration endless discussions about right and left here and there.

If we call to mind what was said in the chapter on the subject of the strategic attack respecting the pit of the stomach in a State, and further, what appears in the fourth chapter of this book, on the influence of time, we believe no further argument is required to prove that the influence which we claim for that principle really belongs to it.

Buonaparte never acted otherwise. The shortest high road from Army to Army, from one capital to another, was always the way he loved best.

And in what will now consist the principal action to which we have referred everything, and for which we have demanded a swift and straightforward execution?

In the fourth chapter we have explained as far as it is possible in a general way what the total overthrow of the enemy means, and it is unnecessary to repeat it. Whatever that may depend on at last in particular cases, still the first step is always the same in all cases, namely: *The destruction of the enemy's combatant force,* that is, *a great victory over the same and its dispersion.* The sooner, which means the nearer our own frontiers, this victory is sought for, *the easier* it is; the later, that is, the further in the heart of the enemy's country, it is gained, the more *decisive* it is. Here, as well as everywhere, the facility of success and its magnitude balance each other.

If we are not so superior to the enemy that the victory is beyond doubt, then we should, when possible, seek him out, that is his principal force. We say *when possible,* for if this endeavour to find him led to great *détours,* false directions, and a loss of time, it might very likely turn out a mistake. If the enemy's principal force is not on our road, and our interests otherwise prevent our going in quest of him, we may be sure we shall meet with him hereafter, for he will not fail to place himself in our way. We shall then, as we have just said, fight under less advantageous circumstances—an evil to which we must submit. However, if we gain the battle, it will be so much the more decisive.

From this it follows that, in the case now assumed, it would be an error to pass by the enemy's principal force designedly, if it places itself in our way, at least if we expect thereby to facilitate a victory.

On the other hand, it follows from what precedes, that if we have a decided superiority over the enemy's principal force, we may designedly pass it by in order at a future time to deliver a more decisive battle.

We have been speaking of a complete victory, therefore of a thorough defeat of the enemy, and not of a mere battle gained. But such a victory requires an enveloping attack, or a battle with an oblique front, for these two forms always give the result a decisive character. It is therefore an essential part of a plan of a War to make arrangements for this movement, both as regards the mass of forces required and the direction to be given them, of which more will be said in the chapter on the plan of campaign.

It is certainly not impossible, that even battles fought with parallel fronts may lead to complete defeats, and cases in point are not wanting in military history; but such an event is uncommon and will be still more so the more Armies become on a par as regards discipline and handiness in the field. We no longer take twenty-one battalions in a village, as they did at Blenheim.

Once the great victory is gained, the next question is not about rest, not about taking breath, not about considering, not about reorganising, &c. &c., but only of pursuit of fresh blows wherever necessary, of the capture of the enemy's capital, of the attack of the Armies of his Allies, or of whatever else appears to be a rallying-point for the enemy.

If the tide of victory carries us near the enemy's fortresses, the laying siege to them or not will depend on our means. If we have a great superiority of force it would be a loss of time not to take them as soon as possible; but if we are not certain of the further events before us, we must keep the fortresses in check with as few troops as possible, which precludes any regular formal sieges. The moment that the siege of a fortress compels us to suspend our strategic advance, that advance, *as a rule,* has reached its culminating point. We demand, therefore, that the main body should press forward rapidly in pursuit without any rest; we have already condemned the idea of allowing the advance towards the principal point being made dependent on success at secondary points; the consequence of this is, that in all ordinary cases, our chief Army only keeps behind it a narrow strip of territory which it can call its own, and which therefore constitutes its theatre of War. How this weakens the momentum at the head, and the dangers for the offensive arising therefrom, we have shown already. Will not this difficulty, will not this intrinsic counterpoise come to a point which impedes further advance? Certainly that may occur; but just as we have already insisted that it would be a mistake to try to avoid this contracted theatre of War at the commencement, and for the sake of that object to rob the advance of its elasticity, so we also now maintain, that as long as the Commander has not yet overthrown his opponent, as long as he considers himself strong enough to effect that object, so long must he also pursue it. He does so perhaps at an increased risk, but also with the prospect of a greater success. If he reaches a point which he cannot venture to go beyond, where, in order to protect his rear, he must extend himself right and left—well, then, this is most probably his culminating point. The power of flight is spent, and if the enemy is not subdued, most probably the opportunity is lost.

All that the assailant now does to intensify his attack by conquest of fortresses, defiles, provinces, is no doubt still a slow advance, but it is only of a relative kind, it is no longer absolute. The enemy is no longer in flight, he is perhaps preparing a renewed resistance, and it is therefore already possible that, although the assailant still advances intensively, the position of the defence is every day improving. In short, we come back to this, that, as a rule, there is no second spring after a halt has once been necessary.

Theory therefore only requires that, as long as there is an intention of destroying the enemy, there must be no cessation in the advance of the attack; if the Commander gives up this object because it is attended with too great a risk, he does right to stop

and extend his force. Theory only objects to this when he does it with a view to more readily defeating the enemy.

We are not so foolish as to maintain that no instance can be found of States having been *gradually* reduced to the utmost extremity. In the first place, the principle we now maintain is no absolute truth, to which an exception is impossible, but one founded only on the ordinary and probable result; next, we must make a distinction between cases in which the downfall of a State has been effected by a slow, gradual process, and those in which the event was the result of a first campaign. We are here only treating of the latter case, for it is only in such that there is that tension of forces which either overcomes the centre of gravity of the weight, or is in danger of being overcome by it. If in the first year we gain a moderate advantage, to which in the following we add another, and thus gradually advance towards our object, there is nowhere very imminent danger, but it is distributed over many points. Each pause between one result and another gives the enemy fresh chances: the effects of the first results have very little influence on those which follow, often none, often a negative only, because the enemy recovers himself, or is perhaps excited to increased resistance, or obtains foreign aid; whereas, when all is done in one march, the success of yesterday brings on with itself that of to-day, one brand lights itself from another. If there are cases in which States have been overcome by successive blows—in which, consequently, *Time,* generally the patron of the defensive, has proved adverse—how infinitely more numerous are the instances in which the designs of the aggressor have by that means utterly failed. Let us only think of the result of the Seven Years' War, in which the Austrians sought to attain their object so comfortably, cautiously, and prudently, that they completely missed it.

In this view, therefore, we cannot at all join in the opinion that the care which belongs to the preparation of a theatre of war, and the impulse which urges us onwards, are on a level in importance, and that the former must, to a certain extent, be a counterpoise to the latter; but we look upon any evil which springs out of the forward movement as an unavoidable evil which only deserves attention when there is no longer hope for us ahead by the forward movement.

Buonaparte's case in 1812, very far from shaking our opinion, has rather confirmed us in it.

His campaign did not miscarry because he advanced too swiftly, or too far, as is commonly believed, but because the only means of success failed. The Russian Empire is no country which can be regularly conquered, that is to say, which can be held in possession, at least not by the forces of the present States of Europe, nor by the 500,000 men with which Buonaparte invaded the country. Such a country can only be subdued by its own weakness, and by the effects of internal dissension. In order to strike these vulnerable points in its political existence, the country must be agitated to its very centre. It was only by reaching Moscow with the force of his blow that Buonaparte could hope to shake the courage of the Government, the loyalty and steadfastness of the people. In Moscow he expected to find peace, and this was the only rational object which he could set before himself in undertaking such a campaign.

He therefore led his main body against that of the Russians, which fell back before him, trudged past the camp at Drissa, and did not stop until it reached Smolensk. He carried Bagration along in his movement, beat the principal Russian Army, and took Moscow. He acted on this occasion as he had always done: it was only in that way that he made himself the arbiter of Europe, and only in that way was it possible for him to do so.

He, therefore, who admires Buonaparte in all his earlier campaigns as the greatest of Generals, ought not to censure him in this instance.

It is quite allowable to judge an event according to the result, as that is the best criticism upon it (see fifth chapter, second book), but this judgment, derived merely from the result, must not then be passed off as evidence of superior understanding. To seek out the causes of the failure of a campaign is not going the length of making a criticism upon it; it is only if we show that these causes should neither have been overlooked nor disregarded that we make a criticism and place ourselves above the General.

Now we maintain that any one who pronounces the campaign of 1812 an absurdity merely on account of the tremendous reaction in it, and who, if it had been successful, would look upon it as a most splendid combination, shows an utter incapacity of judgment.

If Buonaparte had remained in Lithuania, as most of his critics think he should, in order first to get possession of the fortresses, of which, moreover, except Riga, situated quite at one side, there is hardly one, because Bobruisk is a small insignificant place of arms, he would have involved himself for the winter in a miserable defensive system: then the same people would have been the first to exclaim, This is not the old Buonaparte! How is it, he has not got even as far as a first great battle? he who used to put the final seal to his conquests on the last ramparts of the enemy's States, by victories such as Austerlitz and Friedland. Has his heart failed him that he has not taken the enemy's capital, the defenceless Moscow, ready to open its gates, and thus left a nucleus round which new elements of resistance may gather themselves? He had the singular luck to take this far-off and enormous colossus by surprise, as easily as one would surprise a neighbouring town, or as Frederick the Great entered the little state of Silesia, lying at his door, and he makes no use of his good fortune, halts in the middle of his victorious career, as if some evil spirit laid at his heels!—This is the way in which he would have been judged after the result, for this is the fashion of critics' judgments in general.

In opposition to this, we say, the campaign of 1812 did not succeed because the Government remained firm, the people loyal and steadfast, because it therefore could not succeed. Buonaparte may have made a mistake in undertaking such an expedition; at all events, the result has shown that he deceived himself in his calculations, but we maintain that, supposing it necessary to seek the attainment of this object, it could not have been done in any other way.

Instead of burthening himself with an interminable costly defensive War in the east, such as he had on his hands in the west, Buonaparte attempted the only means to gain his object: by one bold stroke to extort a peace from his astonished adversary. The destruction of his Army was the danger to which he exposed himself in the venture; it was the stake in the game, the price of great expectations. If this destruction of his Army was more complete than it need have been through his own fault, this fault was not in his having penetrated too far into the heart of the country, for that was his object and unavoidable, but in the late period at which the campaign opened, the sacrifice of life occasioned by his tactics, the want of due care for the supply of his Army, and for his line of retreat, and lastly, in his having too long delayed his march from Moscow.

That the Russians were able to reach the Beresina before him, intending regularly to cut off his retreat, is no strong argument against us. For in the first place, the failure of that attempt just shows how difficult it is really to cut off an Army, as the Army which was intercepted in this case, under the most unfavourable circumstances that can be conceived, still managed at last to cut its way through; and although this act upon the whole contributed certainly to increase its catastrophe, still it was not essentially the cause of it. Secondly, it was only the very peculiar nature of the country which afforded the means to carry things as far as the Russians did; for if it had not been for the marshes of the Beresina, with its wooded impassable borders lying across the great road, the cutting off would have been still less possible. Thirdly, there are generally no means of guarding against such an eventuality except by making the forward movement with the front of the Army of such a width as we have already disapproved; for if we proceed on the plan of pushing on in advance with the centre and covering the wings by Armies detached right and left, then if either of these detached Armies meets with a check, we must fall back with the centre, and then very little can be gained by the attack.

Moreover, it cannot be said that Buonaparte neglected his wings. A superior force remained fronting Wittgenstein, a proportionate siege-corps stood before Riga, which at the same time was not needed there, and in the south Schwartzenberg had 50,000 men with which he was superior to Tormasoff and almost equal to Tschitschagow: in addition, there were 30,000 men under Victor, covering the rear of the centre. Even in the month of November, therefore, at the decisive moment when the Russian Armies had been reinforced, and the French were very much reduced, the superiority of the Russians in rear of the Moscow Army was not so very extraordinary. Wittgenstein, Tschitschagow, and Sacken made up together a force of 100,000. Schwartzenberg, Regnier, Victor-Oudinot, and St. Cyr had still 80,000 effectives. The most cautious General in advancing would hardly devote a greater proportion of his force to the protection of his flanks.

If out of the 600,000 men who crossed the Niemen in 1812, Buonaparte had brought back 250,000 instead of the 50,000 who repassed it under Schwartzenberg, Regnier, and Macdonald, which was possible, by avoiding the mistakes with which he has been reproached, the campaign would still have been an unfortunate one, but theory would have had nothing to object to it, for the loss of half an Army in such a case is not at all

unusual, and only appears so to us in this instance on account of the enormous scale of the whole enterprise.

So much for the principal operation, its necessary tendency, and the unavoidable risks. As regards the subordinate operations, there must, above all things, be a common aim for all; but this aim must be so situated as not to paralyse the action of any of the individual parts. If we invade France from the Upper and Middle Rhine and Holland with the intention of uniting at Paris, neither of the Armies employed to risk anything on the advance, but to keep itself intact until the concentration is effected, that is what we call a ruinous plan. There must necessarily be a constant comparison of the state of this threefold movement causing delay, indecision, and timidity in the forward movement of each of the Armies It is better to assign to each part its mission, and only to place the point of union wherever these several activities become unity of themselves.

Therefore, when a military force advances to the attack on separate theatres of War, to each Army should be assigned an object against which the force of its shock is to be directed. Here *the point* is that *these shocks* should be given from all sides simultaneously, but not that proportional advantages should result from all of them.

If the task assigned to one Army is found too difficult because the enemy has made a disposition of his force different to that which was expected, if it sustains a defeat, this neither should, nor must have, any influence on the action of the others, or we should turn the probability of the general success against ourselves at the very outset. It is only the unsuccessful issue of the majority of enterprises or of the principal one which can and must have an influence upon the others: for then it comes under the head of a plan which has miscarried.

This same rule applies to those Armies and portions of them which have originally acted on the defensive, and, owing to the successes gained, have assumed the offensive, unless we prefer to attach such spare forces to the principal offensive, a point which will chiefly depend on the geographical situation of the theatre of War.

But under these circumstances, what becomes of the geometrical form and unity of the whole attack, what of the flanks and rear of detachments when those bodies next to them are beaten?

That is precisely what we wish chiefly to combat. This glueing down of a great offensive plan of attack on a geometrical square is losing one’s way in the regions of fallacy.

In the fifteenth chapter of the third book we have shown that the geometrical element has less influence in Strategy than in tactics; and we shall only here repeat the deduction there obtained, that in the attack especially, the actual results at the various points throughout deserve more attention than the geometrical figure, which may gradually be formed through the diversity of results.

But in any case it is quite certain, that looking to the vast spaces with which Strategy has to deal, the views and resolutions which the geometrical situation of the parts may create should be left to the General-in-Chief; that, therefore, no subordinate General has a right to ask what his neighbour is doing or leaving undone, but each is to be directed peremptorily to follow out his object. If any serious incongruity really arises from this, a remedy can always be applied in time by the supreme authority. Thus, then, may be obviated the chief evil of this separate mode of action, which is, that in the place of realities, a cloud of apprehensions and suppositions mix themselves up in the progress of an operation, that every accident affects not only the part it comes immediately in contact with, but also the whole, by the communication of impressions, and that a wide field of action is opened for the personal failings and personal animosities of subordinate commanders.

We think that these views will only appear paradoxical to those who have not studied military history long enough or with sufficient attention, who do not distinguish the important from the unimportant, nor make proper allowance for the influence of human weaknesses in general.

If even in tactics there is a difficulty, which all experienced soldiers admit there is, in succeeding in an attack in separate columns where it depends on the perfect connection of the several columns, how much more difficult, or rather how impossible, must this be in Strategy where the separation is so much wider. Therefore, if a constant connection of all parts was a necessary condition of success, a Strategic plan of attack of that nature must be at once given up. But on the one hand, it is not left to our option to discard it completely, because circumstances which we cannot control may determine in favour of it; on the other hand, even in tactics, this constant close conjunction of all parts at every moment of the execution is not at all necessary, and it is still less so in Strategy. Therefore in Strategy we should pay the less attention to this point, and insist the more upon a distinct piece of work being assigned to each part.

We have still to add one important observation: it relates to the proper allotment of parts.

In the years 1793 and 1794 the principal Austrian Army was in the Netherlands, that of the Prussians on the upper Rhine. The Austrians marched from Vienna to Condé and Valenciennes, crossing the line of march of the Prussians from Berlin to Landau. The Austrians had certainly to defend their Belgian provinces in that quarter, and any conquests made in French Flanders would have been acquisitions conveniently situated for them, but that interest was not strong enough. After the death of Prince Kaunitz, the Minister Thugut carried a measure for giving up the Netherlands entirely, for the better concentration of the Austrian forces. In fact, Austria is about twice as far from Flanders as from Alsace; and at a time when military resources were very limited, and everything had to be paid for in ready money, that was no trifling consideration. Still, the Minister Thugut had plainly something else in view; his object was, through the urgency of the danger to compel Holland, England, and Prussia, the powers interested in the defence of the Netherlands and Lower Rhine, to make greater efforts. He certainly deceived himself in his calculations, because nothing could be

done with the Prussian Cabinet at that time, but this occurrence always shows the influence of political interests on the course of a War.

Prussia had neither anything to conquer nor to defend in Alsace. In the year 1792 it had undertaken the march through Lorraine into Champagne in a sort of chivalrous spirit. But as that enterprise ended in nothing, through the unfavourable course of circumstances, it continued the War with a feeling of very little interest. If the Prussian troops had been in the Netherlands, they would have been in direct communication with Holland, which they might look upon almost as their own country, having conquered it in the year 1787; they would then have covered the Lower Rhine, and consequently that part of the Prussian monarchy which lay next to the theatre of War. Prussia on account of subsidies would also have had a closer alliance with England, which, under these circumstances, would not so easily have degenerated into the crooked policy of which the Prussian Cabinet was guilty at that time.

A much better result, therefore, might have been expected if the Austrians had appeared with their principal force on the Upper Rhine, the Prussians with their whole force in the Netherlands, and the Austrians had left there only a force of proportionate strength.

If, instead of the enterprising Blücher, General Barclay had been placed at the head of the Silesian Army in 1814, and Blücher and Schwartzenberg had been kept with the Grand Army, the campaign would perhaps have turned out a complete failure.

If the enterprising Laudon, instead of having his theatre of War at the strongest point of the Prussian dominions, namely, in Silesia, had been in the position of the German States Army, perhaps the whole Seven Years' War would have had quite a different turn. In order to examine this subject more narrowly, we must look at the cases according to their chief distinctions.

The first is, if we carry on War in conjunction with other powers, who not only take part as our Allies, but also have an independent interest as well.

The second is, if the Army of the Ally has come to our assistance.

The third is, when it is only a question with regard to the personal characteristics of the General.

In the two first cases the point may be raised, whether it is better to mix up the troops of the different powers completely, so that each separate Army is composed of troops of different powers, as was done in the Wars 1813 and 1814, or to keep them separate as much as possible, so that the Army of each power may continue distinct and act independently.

Plainly, the first is the most salutary plan; but it supposes a degree of friendly feeling and community of interests which is seldom found. When there is this close good fellowship between the troops, it is much more difficult for the Cabinets to separate their interests; and as regards the prejudicial influence of the egotistical views of

Commanders, it can only show itself under these circumstances amongst the subordinate Generals, therefore, only in the province of tactics, and even there not so freely or with such impunity as when there is a complete separation. In the latter case, it affects the Strategy, and therefore makes decided marks. But, as already observed. for the first case there must be a rare spirit of conciliation on the part of the Governments. In the year 1813, the exigencies of the time impelled all Governments in that direction; and yet we cannot sufficiently praise this in the Emperor of Russia, that although he entered the field with the strongest Army, and the change of fortune was chiefly brought about by him, yet he set aside all pride about appearing at the head of a separate and an independent Russian Army, and placed his troops under the Prussian and Austrian Commanders.

If such a fusion of forces cannot be effected, a complete separation of them is certainly better than a half and half state of things; the worst of all is when two independent Commanders of Armies of different powers find themselves on the same theatre of War, as frequently happened in the Seven Years' War with the Armies of Russia, Austria, and the German States. When there is a complete separation of forces, the burdens which must be borne are also better divided, and each suffers only from what is his own, consequently is more impelled to activity by the force of circumstances; but if they find themselves in close connection, or quite on the same theatre of War, this is not the case, and besides that the ill-will of one paralyses also the powers of the other as well.

In the first of the three supposed cases, there will be no difficulty in the complete separation, as the natural interest of each State generally indicates to it a separate mode of employing its force; this may not be so in the second case, and then, as a rule, there is nothing to be done but to place oneself completely under the auxiliary Army, if its strength is in any way proportionate to that measure, as the Austrians did in the latter part of the campaign of 1815, and the Prussians in the campaign of 1807.

With regard to the personal qualifications of the General, everything in this passes into what is particular and individual; but we must not omit to make one general remark, which is, that we should not, as is generally done, place at the head of subordinate Armies the most prudent and cautious Commanders, but the *most enterprising;* for we repeat that in Strategic operations conducted separately, there is nothing more important than that every part should develop its powers to the full, in that way faults committed at one part may be compensated for by successes at others. This complete activity at all points, however, is only to be expected when the Commanders are spirited, enterprising men, who are urged forward by natural impulsiveness by their own hearts, because a mere objective, coolly reasoned out, conviction of the necessity of action seldom suffices.

Lastly, we have to remark that, if circumstances in other respects permit, the troops and their Commanders, as regards their destination, should be employed in accordance with their qualities and the nature of the country—that is regular Armies; good troops; numerous cavalry; old, prudent, intelligent Generals in an open country;—Militia; national levies; young enterprising Commanders in wooded

country, mountains and defiles;—auxiliary forces in rich provinces where they can make themselves comfortable.

What we have now said upon a plan of a War in general, and in this chapter upon those in particular which are directed to the destruction of the enemy, is intended to give special prominence to the object of the same, and next to indicate principles which may serve as guides in the preparation of ways and means. Our desire has been in this way to give a clear perception of what is to be, and should be, done in such a War. We have tried to emphasise the necessary and general, and to leave a margin for the play of the particular and accidental; but to exclude all that is *arbitrary, unfounded, trifling, fantastical,or sophistical.* If we have succeeded in this object, we look upon our problem as solved.

Now, if any one wonders at finding nothing here about turning rivers, about commanding mountains from their highest points, about avoiding strong positions, and finding the keys of a country, he has not understood us, neither does he as yet understand War in its general relations according to our views.

In preceding books we have characterised these subjects in general, and we there arrived at the conclusion that they are much more insignificant in their nature than we should think from their high repute. Therefore, so much the less can or ought they to play a great part, that is, so far as to influence the whole plan of a War, when it is a War which has for its object the destruction of the enemy.

At the end of the book we shall devote a chapter specially to the consideration of the Chief Command; the present chapter we shall close with an example.

If Austria, Prussia, the German Confederation, the Netherlands and England, determine on a War with France, but Russia remains neutral—a case which has frequently happened during the last one hundred and fifty years—they are able to carry on an offensive War, having for its object the overthrow of the enemy. For powerful and great as France is, it is still possible for it to see more than half its territory overrun by the enemy, its capital occupied, and itself reduced in its means to a state of complete inefficiency, without there being any power, except Russia, which can give it effectual support. Spain is too distant and too disadvantageously situated; the Italian States are at present too brittle and powerless.

The countries we have named have, exclusive of their possessions out of Europe, above 75,000,000 inhabitants,* whilst France has only 30,000,000; and the Army which they could call out for a War against France, really meant in earnest, would be as follows, without exaggeration:

Austria	250,000
Prussia	200,000
The rest of Germany	150,000
Netherlands	75,000
England	50,000
Total	725,000

Should this force be placed on a War footing it would, in all probability, very much exceed that which France could oppose; for under Buonaparte the country never raised troops of the like strength.* Now, if we take into account the deductions required as garrisons for fortresses and depôts, to watch the coasts, &c., there can be no doubt the Allies would have a great superiority in the principal theatre of War, and upon that the object or plan of overthrowing the enemy is chiefly founded.

The centre of gravity of the French power lies in its military force and in Paris. To defeat the former in one or more battles, to take Paris and drive the wreck of the French across the Loire, must be the object of the Allies. The pit of the stomach of the French monarchy is between Paris and Brussels, on that side the frontier is only one hundred and fifty miles from the capital. Part of the Allies—the English, Netherlanders, Prussians, and North German States—have their natural point of assembly in that direction, as these States lie partly in the immediate vicinity, partly in a direct line behind it. Austria and South Germany can only carry on their War conveniently from the Upper Rhine. Their natural direction is upon Troyes and Paris, or it may be Orleans. Both shocks, therefore, that from the Netherlands and the other from the Upper Rhine, are quite direct and natural, short and powerful; and both fall upon the centre of gravity of the enemy's power. Between these two points, therefore, the whole invading Army should be divided.

But there are two considerations which interfere with the simplicity of this plan.

The Austrians would not lay bare their Italian dominions, they would wish to retain the mastery over events there, in any case, and therefore would not incur the risk of making an attack on the heart of France, by which they would leave Italy only indirectly covered. Looking to the political state of the country, this collateral consideration is not to be treated with contempt; but it would be a decided mistake if the old and oft-tried plan of an attack from Italy, directed against the South of France, was bound up with it, and if on that account the force in Italy was increased to a size not required for mere security against contingencies in the first campaign. Only the number needed for that security should remain in Italy, only that number should be withdrawn from the great undertaking, if we would not be unfaithful to that first maxim, *Unity of plan, concentration of force.* To think of conquering France by the Rhône would be like trying to lift a musket by the point of its bayonet; but also as an auxiliary enterprise, an attack on the South of France is to be condemned, for it only raises new forces against us. Whenever an attack is made on distant provinces, interest and activities are roused, which would otherwise have lain dormant. It would only be in case the forces left for the security of Italy were in excess of the number required, and, therefore, to avoid leaving them unemployed, that there would be any justification for an attack on the South of France from that quarter.

We therefore repeat that the force left in Italy must be kept down as low as circumstances will permit; and it will be quite large enough if it will suffice to prevent the Austrians from losing the whole country in one campaign. Let us suppose that number to be 50,000 men for the purpose of our illustration.

Another consideration deserving attention is the relation of France in respect to its sea coast. As England has the upper hand at sea, it follows that France must, on that account, be very susceptible with regard to the whole of her Atlantic coast; and, consequently, must protect it with garrisons of greater or less strength. Now, however weak this coast defence may be, still the French frontiers are tripled by it; and large drafts, on that account, cannot fail to be withdrawn from the French Army on the theatre of War. Twenty or thirty thousand troops disposable to effect a landing, with which the English threaten France, would probably absorb twice or three times the number of French troops; and, further, we must think not only of troops, but also of money, artillery, &c. &c., required for ships and coast batteries. Let us suppose that the English devote 25,000 to this object.

Our plan of War would then consist simply in this:

(1) That in the Netherlands:

200,000	Prussians,
75,000	Netherlanders,
25,000	English,
50,000	North German Confederation,
Total 350,000	be assembled,

of whom about 50,000 should be set aside to garrison frontier fortresses, and the remaining 300,000 should advance against Paris, and engage the French Army in a decisive battle.

(2) That 200,000 Austrians and 100,000 South German troops should assemble on the Upper Rhine to advance at the same time as the Army of the Netherlands, their direction being towards the Upper Seine, and from thence towards the Loire, with a view, likewise, to a great battle. These two attacks would, perhaps, unite in one on the Loire.

By this the chief point is determined. What we have to add is chiefly intended to root out false conceptions, and is as follows:

(1) To seek for the great battle, as prescribed, and deliver it with such a relation, in point of numerical strength and under such circumstances, as promises a decisive victory is the course for the chief Commanders to follow; to this object everything must be sacrificed, and as few men as possible should be employed in sieges, blockades, garrisons, &c. If, like Schwartzenberg in 1814, as soon as they enter the enemy’s provinces they spread out in eccentric rays all is lost. That this did not take place in 1814 the Allies may thank the powerless state of France alone. The attack should be like a wedge well driven home, not like a soap-bubble, which distends itself till it bursts.

(2) Switzerland must be left to its own forces. If it remains neutral it forms a good *point d’appui* on the Upper Rhine; if it is attacked by France, let her stand up for herself, which in more than one respect she is very well able to do. Nothing is more

absurd than to attribute to Switzerland a predominant geographical influence upon events in War because it is the highest land in Europe. Such an influence only exists under certain very restricted conditions, which are not to be found here. When the French are attacked in the heart of their country they can undertake no offensive from Switzerland, either against Italy or Swabia, and, least of all, can the elevated situation of the country come into consideration as a decisive circumstance. The advantage of a country which is dominating in a strategic sense is, in the first place, chiefly important in the defensive, and any importance which it has in the offensive may manifest itself in a single encounter. Whoever does not know this has not thought over the thing and arrived at a clear perception of it, and in case that at any future council of potentates and Generals, some learned officer of the General Staff should be found who, with an anxious brow, displays such wisdom, we now declare it beforehand to be mere folly, and wish that in the same council some true Soldier, some child of sound common sense, may be present who will stop his mouth.

(3) The space between two attacks we think of very little consequence. When 600,000 assemble one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles from Paris to march against the heart of France, would any one think of covering the Middle Rhine as well as Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, and Munich? There would be no sense in such a thing. Are we to cover the communications? That would not be unimportant; but then we might soon be led into giving this covering the importance of an attack, and then, instead of advancing on two lines, as the situation of the States positively requires, we should be led to advance upon three, which is not required. These three would then, perhaps, become five, or perhaps seven, and in that way the old rigmarole would once more become the order of the day.

Our two attacks have each their object; the forces employed on them are very probably superior to the enemy in numbers. If each pursues his march with vigour, they cannot fail to react advantageously upon each other. If one of the two attacks is unfortunate because the enemy has not divided his force equally, we may fairly expect that the result of the other will of itself repair this disaster, and this is the true interdependence between the two. An interdependence extending to (so as to be affected by) the events of each day is impossible on account of the distance; neither is it necessary, and therefore the immediate or rather the direct connection is of no such great value.

Besides, the enemy attacked in the very centre of his dominions will have no forces worth speaking of to employ in interrupting this connection; all that is to be apprehended is that this interruption may be attempted by a co-operation of the inhabitants with the partisans, so that this object does not actually cost the enemy any troops. To prevent that, it is sufficient to send a body of 10,000 or 15,000 men, particularly strong in cavalry, in the direction from Treves to Rheims. It will be able to drive every partisan before it, and keep in line with the Grand Army. This corps should neither invest nor watch fortresses, but march between them, depend on no fixed basis, but give way before superior forces in any direction, no great misfortune could happen to it, and if such did happen, it would again be no serious misfortune for the whole. Under these circumstances, such a force might probably serve as an intermediate link between the two attacks.

(4) The two subordinate undertakings, that is, the Austrian Army in Italy, and the English Army for landing on the coast, might follow their object as appeared best. If they do not remain idle, their mission is fulfilled as regards the chief point, and on no account should either of the two great attacks be made dependent in any way on these minor ones.

We are quite convinced that in this way France may be overthrown and chastised whenever she thinks fit to put on that insolent air with which she has oppressed Europe for a hundred and fifty years. It is only on the other side of Paris, on the Loire, that those conditions can be wrung from her which are necessary for the peace of Europe. In this way alone the natural relation between 30 millions of men and 75 millions will quickly make itself known, but not if the country from Dunkirk to Genoa is to be surrounded in the way it has been for 150 years by a girdle of Armies, whilst fifty different small objects are aimed at, not one of which is powerful enough to overcome the inertia, friction, and extraneous influences which spring up and reproduce themselves everywhere, but more especially in allied Armies.

How little the provisional organisation of the German Federal Armies is adapted to such a disposition will strike the reader. By that organisation the federative part of Germany forms the nucleus of the German power, and Prussia and Austria, thus weakened, lose their natural influence. But a federative State is a very brittle nucleus in War—there is in it no unity, no energy, no rational choice of a Commander, no authority, no responsibility.

Austria and Prussia are the two natural centres of force of the German Empire; they form the pivot (or fulcrum), the forte of the sword; they are monarchical States, used to War; they have well-defined interests, independence of power; they are predominant over the others. The organisation should follow these natural lineaments, and not a false notion about unity, which is an impossibility in such a case; and he who neglects the possible in quest of the impossible is a fool.

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APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF THE INSTRUCTION GIVEN BY THE AUTHOR TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE CROWN PRINCE IN THE YEARS 1810, 1811, AND 1812

SCHEME WHICH WAS LAID BEFORE GENERAL VON GAUDY

Presuming that it is only a preliminary knowledge of the Art of War which His Royal Highness the Crown Prince is to receive from me, with a view to His Royal Highness being enabled to understand modern military history, it is of the first importance that I should give the Prince a clear idea of War, and that I should do so in such a manner as to avoid diffuseness, or taxing the Prince's faculties too much.

In order to acquire a thorough knowledge of a science, it is necessary to apply one's mind chiefly to the study of it for some time, and it appears to be too soon for the Prince to do this.

For these reasons I have adopted the following course, which appears to me most in accordance with the natural direction of the ideas of a young man.

In carrying it out my chief endeavour will be, in the first place, to make myself always intelligible to the Prince, as otherwise the most attentive pupil must soon become wearied, confused and disgusted; secondly, in every case to avoid giving any erroneous ideas, through which his further instruction or the progress of his own studies might be impeded or interfered with.

For the sake of the first of these objects, I shall endeavour to keep the subject always in correspondence with the natural understanding as much as possible, and in this effort shall often deviate from the scientific spirit and scholastic forms.

I now submit to your Excellency the plan I have sketched hastily, and beg you will do me the favour to correct my view in any points in which it may not be in accordance with your own.

Next to a preparatory knowledge of weapons and the different kinds of troops, some conception of applied or higher tactics, as they are called, and Strategy, is principally necessary in order to comprehend military history. Tactics, or the theory of fighting, is in reality the principal thing, partly because battles are decisive, partly because it comprises the most of what can be taught. Strategy, or the theory of the combination of separate battles towards the object of the campaign, is a subject more of natural and matured power of judgment; still, we must at least point out clearly the subjects which are therein to be found, and show their mutual connection and relation to the whole.

Field fortification in such a synoptical course will be most suitably placed with the theory of the defensive in tactics, permanent fortification in or after Strategy.

Tactics itself comprises two different classes of subjects. One class may be understood without having an acquaintance with the strategic relations of the whole; to this belong the formation for tactical purposes, and the mode of fighting of all the smaller parts, from the Company or Squadron up to a Brigade of all arms, and in all kinds of country. Those of the other class are in intimate connection with strategic conceptions; to this class belong the usual action of whole Corps and Armies in battle, outpost services, and the minor operations of War, &c. &c., because in such there are introduced conceptions of position, battle, march, &c., which cannot be understood without previous conceptions of the combination of the whole campaign.

I shall, therefore, separate the two classes of subjects; begin with a concise and very general description of War, pass on to tactics, or the action of the smaller divisions in battle, and then stop short when I reach the position (order of battle) of whole Corps or Armies, in order to return to the general view of the campaign, and to explain more in detail the connection of things; then the remaining chapters on tactics will follow.

Lastly, I shall begin Strategy again, with the idea of the course of a campaign, in order to consider the subject from this new point of view.

From this now follows the arrangement as under:

Arms.

Powder, small arms, rifles, cannon, and all appertaining thereto

Artillery.

Theory of charges for horizontal and vertical firing.

Service of cannon of all kinds.

Organisation of a Battery.

Expense of guns and ammunition, &c.

Effect of artillery—ranges—probability of hitting.

Other Kinds Of Troops

Cavalry—light—heavy.

Infantry—ditto.

Formation—destination—character

Applied Or Higher Tactics.

A general conception of War—battles. Position of smaller divisions, and their mode of fighting.

A Company of Infantry with or without Artillery on all kinds of ground.

A Squadron of Cavalry the same.

The two together.

Ditto in different kinds of ground.

Order of battle for a Corps of several Brigades.

Ditto of an Army of several Corps.

The two last sections without relation to ground, because otherwise the idea of position would be introduced.

More detailed explanation of a campaign.

Organisation of Army at the commencement of a campaign.

Whilst it marches, and takes up positions, it requires measures of security—outposts—patrols—reconnaissances—detachments—minor warfare.

When an Army chooses a position, such arrangements must be made that the Army can defend itself in the same—tactical defensive—field fortification.

Attack of the enemy in such positions—conduct to be observed in the combat itself—battle—retreat—pursuit.

Marches—defence of rivers—passage of rivers—lines of posts—cantonments.

Strategy.

View of a campaign and of a whole War in Strategy respects.

What determines the result in War.

Plan of operations.

Plan of operations—arrangements for subsistence.

Offensive War.

Defensive War.

Positions—lines of posts—battles—marches—defence and passage of rivers.

Cantonments—winter quarters.

Mountain Warfare.

System of War, &c. &c.

Permanent fortification and siege operations either precede Strategy or form a conclusion to the whole.

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THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF THE ART OF WAR TO COMPLETE MY COURSE OF INSTRUCTION OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE CROWN PRINCE

Although these principles are the result of much reflection and an assiduous study of military history, they have only been drawn up hastily on the present occasion, and the form in which they appear will not bear any stringent criticism. Besides, from the multiplicity of subjects, only the most important have been selected, a certain conciseness being essentially necessary. These principles, therefore, do not constitute a complete course of instruction for your Royal Highness. They are only intended as a foundation for reflection on your own part, and to serve as a guide in these reflections.

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I.—

GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE OBSERVED IN WAR

(1) The great object of the theory of War is to guide us to the way of obtaining a preponderance of physical force and advantages at the decisive points; but if this is not possible, theory teaches also how to speculate upon the moral powers; upon the probable errors of the enemy, upon the impression made by a bold spirit of enterprise, &c. &c.—even upon our own desperation. All this is by no means beyond the province of the Art of War and its theory, for that theory is nothing but rational reflection upon all situations in which we can be placed in War. The most dangerous positions in which we can be placed are just those which we should look upon as most likely to occur, and those about which we should most distinctly make up our minds. That leads to heroic resolves founded on reason.

Whoever represents the affair to your Royal Highness in any other manner is a pedant, who can only do harm by the views he advances. In the critical moments of life, in the tumult of battle, you will one day feel clearly that no other view can give any help when help is most necessary, and when a dry pedantry of figures leaves us to our fate.

(2) Naturally in War we always seek to have the probability of success on our side, whether it be that we count upon a physical or moral superiority. But this is not always possible; we must often undertake things when the *probability* of our succeeding is *against us, if, for instance, we can do nothing better.* If, in such a case, we despair, then our rational reflection and judgment leave us just when most wanted, when everything seems to conspire against us.

Therefore, even when the probability of success is against us, we must not, on that account, consider our undertaking as impossible or unreasonable; reasonable it will always be if we can do nothing better, and if we employ the few means we have to the best advantage.

In order that in such cases we may never lose equanimity and firmness, two qualities which in War are always the first to be in peril, which, in such a situation, are difficult to maintain, but without which, with the most brilliant qualities of the mind, we can effect nothing, we must familiarise ourselves with the idea of falling with honour; cherish that idea constantly and completely accustom ourselves to it. Be convinced, most noble Prince, that without this firm determination nothing great can be effected in the most fortunate War, to say nothing of an unfortunate one.

We may be certain that this idea often occupied the mind of Frederick II. during his first Silesian campaign; and because he was accustomed to it he made the attack at Leuthen on that memorable December 5, not because he had made a calculation that with the oblique order of battle he would in all probability beat the Austrians.

(3) Amongst all the operations left to your choice in any given case, amongst all the measures which are open to adoption, there will always be a choice between the bold and the prudent. Some people think that theory is always on the side of the prudent. That is false. If theory could give advice in the matter, it would counsel the most decisive, consequently the boldest, as that is most consistent with the nature of War; but it leaves to the General to choose according to the measure of his own courage, of his spirit of enterprise, and confidence in himself. Choose then according to the measure of these inner powers; always remembering that there never was a great General who was wanting in boldness.

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II.—

TACTICS OR THE THEORY OF COMBAT

War consists of a combination of many distinct battles. Now, although this combination may be either skilful or the reverse, and the result in a great measure depends upon that point, still the battle itself stands before it in point of importance, for nothing but a combination of successful battles gives a good result. Therefore, the thing of the highest importance in War will always be the art of conquering the enemy in battle. On this your Royal Highness cannot bestow too much attention and thought. The following principles I hold to be the most important:

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1.—

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A.—

FOR THE DEFENCE

(1) To keep troops on the defensive under cover from fire as long as possible. As we may be attacked, consequently may have to defend ourselves at any moment, except when we are ourselves acting on the offensive; we must therefore always take up a position as much under cover as possible.

(2) Not to bring the whole force into action at once. If this fault is committed, all rational guidance of the combat is at an end; it is only with disposable troops that we can turn the course of a battle.

(3) To trouble ourselves little about the width of our front, as it is a matter of little consequence in itself, and the depth of the position (that is, the number of troops placed one behind the other) is diminished by an extension of the front. Troops which are in rear of the front line are disposable; they can either be used to restore the combat at that point or be brought forward at other adjacent points. This principle follows from the preceding.

(4) As the enemy, whilst he attacks some part of the front, often seeks to outflank and envelop at the same time, therefore the troops placed in rear are available to repel such attempts, and accordingly supply the want of local obstacles on which to rest the flanks. They are better placed for that purpose than if they stood in line and extended the width of the front, for in such case they themselves would be easily turned by the enemy. This point also further establishes the second.

(5) If there are many troops to be posted in the rear, only a part should be placed directly behind the front, the rest are placed in an oblique direction (in echelon) to the rear, beyond either flank.

From this last position, the enemy's columns approaching to turn our flank can in turn be taken in flank.

(6) It is a first maxim never to remain perfectly passive, but to fall upon the enemy in front and flank, even when he is in the act of making an attack upon us. We adopt the defensive therefore on a certain line only to compel the enemy to develop his forces for the attack of that line, and we then pass over to the offensive with troops which have been kept in reserve. As your Royal Highness once justly remarked, The art of field fortification is not to serve the defender like a wall behind which he can stand in greater security, but to aid him in attacking the enemy with more success,—the same

applies to every passive defence: it is always only the means of attacking the enemy with advantage on ground that we have looked out and prepared for ourselves, and where we have drawn up our troops.

(7) This attack, belonging to the defensive, may be made either at the moment the enemy opens his attack on us, or whilst he is on the march to do so. It may also be arranged so that, when the enemy commences his attack, we draw back and thus lure him on to ground of which he is ignorant, in order to fall upon him on all sides. For all dispositions of this kind, the deep formation of an Army, that is, an order in which only two-thirds or the half, or even less, are in front, and the rest posted directly and obliquely in rear, under cover if possible, is very well suited; and, therefore, this order of battle is a point of infinite importance.

(8) Therefore, if we have two Divisions, it is better to place one behind the other than to place them in line; with three Divisions, one at *least* should be placed in rear; with four, probably two; with five, at least two, in many cases, three, &c. &c.

(9) At the points where we remain passive, we should make use of field fortification, but only in separate enclosed works of bold profile.

(10) In forming a plan of battle, we should have a *great object* in view, as, for example, the attack of a strong column of the enemy, and a complete victory over it. If we only choose a small object, whilst the enemy pursues a great one, we shall evidently be the losers. We play with thalers against pfennings.

(11) If our plan of defence is aimed at some great object (the destruction of a column of an enemy, &c.), we must follow it up with the utmost energy, expend upon it all our forces. In most cases, the efforts of the assailant will be in some other direction; whilst we fall upon his right wing, he will be seeking to gain an advantage with his left. If we slacken our efforts sooner than the enemy, if we follow up our object with less energy than he does, he will attain his object, he will gain his advantage completely, whilst we shall only half reach ours. Thus the enemy obtains the preponderance, thus the victory becomes his, and we must give up even our half advantage gained. If your Royal Highness reads attentively the account of the Battles of Ratisbonne and Wagram, you will see both the truth and importance of this.

In both these battles the Emperor Napoleon attacked with his right wing, standing on the defensive with the left. The Archduke Charles did the same. But the one did it with full resolution and energy, the other was undecided, and always stopped half-way. The successes gained by that portion of the Archduke's Army which was victorious were unimportant; those which the Emperor Napoleon gained in the same time at the opposite point were *decisive.*

(12) If I may be allowed to bring forward once more the two last principles, the combination of them yields a maxim which, in the modern Art of War, may be regarded as the first among all causes of victory, that is: to follow up a great and decisive object with energy and perseverance.

(13) Danger in case of failure is increased thereby, it is true; but prudence increased at the cost of victory is no Art; it is a false prudence which, as already said, is opposed to the very nature of War; for great ends we must venture much. True prudence is, if we risk anything in War, to select and apply carefully the means to our end, and to neglect nothing through indolence or want of consideration. Of this kind was the prudence of the Emperor Napoleon, who never followed great objects timidly and with half measures through over-prudence.

Among the few victorious defensive battles that are noted in history, you will find, noble Sir, that the greatest were fought in the spirit of these principles, for they are principles derived from the study of history.

At Minden, the Duke Ferdinand suddenly appeared on a field of battle on which the enemy did not expect him, and proceeded to the attack; whilst at Tannhausen he defended himself passively behind entrenchments.

At Rossbach, Frederick II. threw himself on the enemy at a point and at a time where his attack was not expected.

At Leignitz, the Austrians found the King in the night in quite a different position from that in which they had seen him the day before; he fell upon a column of the enemy with the whole weight of his Army, and defeated it before the others could take part in the engagement.

At Hohenlinden, Moreau had five Divisions in his front and four behind him, either directly or obliquely to the rear; he turned the enemy, and fell upon the right-flank column before it could carry out its intended attack.

At Ratisbonne, Marshal Davoust defended himself passively, while Napoleon with the right wing attacked the fifth and sixth Austrian Corps, and completely defeated them.

At Wagram the Austrians were, in reality, on the defensive, still as they attacked the Emperor on the second day with the greater part of their force, we may look upon the latter as acting on the defensive. With his right wing he attacked the Austrian left, turned and beat it, not troubling himself meanwhile about his weak left wing (consisting of a single Division), resting on the Danube; but by means of his strong reserves (deep position) he prevented the victory of the Austrian right wing from having any influence on the victory he had gained on the Rossbach. With these reserves he re-took Aderklaa.

All the foregoing principles are not plainly exemplified in each of the battles enumerated, but all are examples of an active defensive.

The mobility of the Prussian Army under Frederick II. was a means to victory for him, upon which we can no longer build, as other Armies are as capable of moving as ours now.* On the other hand, at that time the turning a flank was less generally in vogue, and, therefore, the deep order of battle was less imperative.

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B.—

FOR THE ATTACK

(1) We try to fall upon a point in the enemy's position; that is, a part of his Army (a Division, a Corps), with a great preponderance of force, whilst we keep the other parts in unce tainty, that is to say, occupy them. It is only in this way that when our forces are equal or inferior we can fight with the superiority on our side, that is, with a probability of success. If we are very weak, then we can only spare very few troops to occupy the enemy at other points, that we may be as strong as possible at the decisive point. Unquestionably Frederick II. only gained the battle of Leuthen because he had his small Army on one spot and well concentrated, as compared with the enemy.

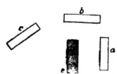
(2) The principal blow is directed against a wing of the enemy's force by an attack in front and flank, or by completely going round it and attacking it in rear. It is only if we push the enemy off his line of retreat by the victory that we gain a great success.

(3) Even when in strong force we often choose only one point for the great shock, and give the blow against that point the greater strength; for to surround an Army completely is seldom possible, or supposes an immense preponderance both physically and morally. But the enemy may also be cut off from his line of retreat by an attack directed against a point in one of his flanks, and that is generally sufficient to ensure great results.

(4) Generally the certainty (high probability) of the victory—that is, the certainty of being able to drive the enemy from the field of battle, is the principal point. Upon this, as an object or end, the plan of the battle must be formed, for a victory once gained, even if it is not decisive, is easily made so by energy in pursuit.

(5) We endeavour to make our attack concentrically on that wing of the enemy which is to receive the shock of our main body, that is, in such a form that his troops find themselves engaged on all sides at once. Allowing that the enemy has troops enough to show a front in all directions, still the troops, under such circumstances, become more easily discouraged; they suffer more, are sooner thrown into disorder, &c.; in short, we may expect to make them give way sooner.

(6) This turning of the enemy compels the assailant to develop a greater force in front than the defender.



If the units *a, b, c* are to fall concentrically (or by converging lines) on the part *e* of the enemy's force, they must naturally stand on lines contiguous to each other. But this development of our force in front must never be carried so far that we do not

retain strong reserves. That would be the greatest error possible, and would lead to defeat, if the enemy is only in some measure prepared against being out-flanked.

If *a, b, c* are units intended to attack *e,* a part of the enemy's Army, then the units *f, g* must be kept in reserve. With this deep formation we can incessantly renew our attacks upon the same point, and if our troops are repulsed at the opposite extremity of the enemy's position, we are not obliged to give up the day at this, because we have a set-off to any success the enemy may have gained. It was thus with the French at Wagram. The left wing, which was opposed to the Austrian right resting on the Danube, was extremely weak and was totally defeated. Even their centre at Aderklaa was not very strong, and was obliged to give way to the Austrians on the first day. But that did not signify, because the Emperor's right, with which he attacked the Austrian left in front and flank, had such a depth that he brought a heavy column of cavalry and horse artillery to bear upon the Austrians in Aderklaa, and if he did not beat them, was able, at all events, to stop their progress.

(7) As in the defensive, so in the offensive, that part of the enemy's Army which, in its destruction, will yield decisive advantages should be the object of attack.

(8) As in the defensive, so here, we must not relax our efforts till we have attained our object, or that our means are entirely exhausted. If the defender is also active if he attacks us at other points, we have no chance of the victory except by surpassing him in energy and boldness. If he remains passive, then, in that case, we run no great danger.

(9) Long, continuous lines of troops are to be particularly avoided, they only lead to parallel attacks which are now no longer to the purpose.

Each Division makes its own attack, although in conformity with the plans of higher authority, and consequently so that they accord with each other. But one Division (8000 to 10,000 men) is never now formed in one line, always in three or four; from this it follows that no long, continuous lines can be used any more.

(10) The attacks of Divisions or Corps in concert must not be combined with the intention of their being under one guidance, so that, although at a distance from each other and perhaps even separated by the enemy, they still remain in communication, even aligning themselves on each other, &c. . This is an erroneous method of carrying out a co-operation, which is liable to a thousand accidents, through which nothing great can ever be effected, and by which one is almost certain to be well beaten if we have to deal with an active, vigorous enemy.*

The true way is to give each Corps or Division Commander the general control of his march, to give him the enemy as the point on which his march is to be directed, and the victory over the enemy as the object of his march.

Each Commander of a column has, therefore, the order to attack the enemy where he finds him, and to do so with all his strength. He must not be made answerable for the result, for that leads to indecision; he must be responsible for nothing more than that his Corps joins in the fight with all its energies and makes any sacrifice that may be necessary.

(11) A well-organised independent Corps can resist the attacks of a vastly superior force for a certain length of time (some hours) and is, therefore, not to be destroyed in a moment; therefore, if it has even been engaged too soon with the enemy and is beaten, still its action is not lost on the whole; the enemy must have deployed his forces, and expended a certain portion of them on this Corps, and thus given our other Corps a favourable opportunity for attack.

Of the organisation of a Corps for this purpose, we shall speak hereafter.

We ensure the harmonious action of the whole in concert when each Corps has in this manner a certain independence, and seeks out the enemy and attacks him at any cost.

(12) One of the most important principles for offensive War is the surprise of the enemy. The more the attack partakes of the nature of a surprise, the more successful we may expect to be. The surprise which the defender effects by the concealment of his dispositions, by the covered position in which he places his troops, the offensive can only effect by the unexpected march to the attack.

This is an occurrence which rarely happens in modern Warfare. This is partly owing to better measures for the security of an Army; partly owing to campaigns being now prosecuted with more vigour, so that there are not now those long pauses in the operations which lulled the one party to sleep, and gave the other a favourable opportunity to make a sudden attack.

Under these circumstances, except by a regular night-surprise (as at Hochkirch), which is *always* possible, the only way now to surprise an enemy is to make a march to the flank or the rear, and then suddenly return upon him; or if we are at a distance, then by forced marches, and by great efforts, to reach the enemy's position sooner than he expects.

(13) The regular surprise (by night, as at Hochkirch), affords the best chance of doing something when our Army is small; but it is attended with more risks for the assailant, if the defender knows the country better than he does. The less we know of the country and of the enemy's arrangements the greater these risks are; therefore, such attacks, in many instances, can only be regarded as desperate means.

(14) In such attacks, all the arrangements must be more simple, and we must keep still more concentrated than by day.

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2.—

PRINCIPLES FOR THE USE OF TROOPS

(1) Since we cannot dispense with the use of fire-arms (if we could, why should we carry them at all?) we must open the combat with them, and the cavalry should not be employed until the enemy has suffered considerably by the action of infantry and artillery. From this follows:

(*a*) That the cavalry should be posted behind the infantry.

(*b*) That we must not be induced to bring the cavalry into action too soon. The cavalry should not be launched boldly to the attack until such disorder prevails in the enemy's ranks that we may hope for success by his hasty retreat.

(2) The fire of artillery produces greater effect than that of infantry. A battery of eight six-pounders does not occupy a third part of the front of a battalion of infantry, is worked by an eighth of the number of men composing a battalion, and does certainly twice, if not three times, as much execution with its fire.* On the other hand, artillery has the disadvantage of not being so easily moved as infantry. This applies in general, even to the lightest description of horse artillery, for it cannot be used like infantry upon any ground. From the commencement, therefore, the artillery must be kept united at the most important points, because it cannot, like infantry, concentrate itself at those points during the progress of the battle. A great battery of twenty or thirty guns is in most cases decisive at the point where it is placed.

(3) From the particulars just specified and others which are evident, the following rules present themselves for the use of the different arms of the service respectively.

(*a*) The battle is commenced by artillery. The greater proportion of that arm being brought into use from the very first, it is only with large masses of troops that both horse and foot artillery are kept in reserve. Artillery is used in large masses brought together at single points. Twenty or thirty guns defend the principal point in one great battery, or batter the point in the enemy's line which it is intended to attack.

(*b*) We next use light infantry—either marksmen, riflemen, or fusiliers—principally in order not to bring too many troops into action at once; we try first to feel what there is in our front (for that can seldom be properly examined), we want to see which direction the fight as likely to take.

If we can maintain an equal fight with the enemy with this line of skirmishers, and that there is no reason for hastening the affair, we should do wrong to hurry forward other forces; we should weary out the enemy with this kind of fight as much as possible.

(*c*) If the enemy brings so many troops into the combat as to overpower our line of skirmishers, or if we cannot delay any longer, we bring forward a full line of infantry, which deploys itself at 100 or 200* paces from the enemy, and either opens fire or advances to the attack, according to circumstances.

(*d*) This is the chief purpose for which the infantry is destined: if we are drawn up in such deep formation that we have still a line of infantry in column in reserve, we are tolerably well master of the combat at this point. This second line of infantry should, if possible, be used only in columns, to decide the day.

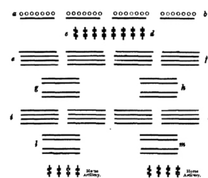
(*e*) The cavalry during this time keeps in rear of the troops engaged in action, as near as it can, without suffering much loss, that is beyond the reach of grape and musketry. It must, however, be at hand, that we may be able to profit by any success which takes place in the course of the combat.

(4) In following these rules more or less strictly, we must keep in view the following principle, on which I cannot insist too strongly, viz., not to make a venture with all our forces at once, because we thus throw away all means of directing them; to weary our adversary with as few troops as possible, and keep in hand a considerable mass for the last decisive moment. Once this last reserve is staked, it must be led with the utmost boldness.

(5) An order of battle, that is, a method of drawing up the troops before and during the battle, must be established for the whole campaign. This order of battle is to be observed in all cases when there is not time to make special dispositions. It must, therefore, be based chiefly with a view to the defensive. This order of battle will reduce the form or manner in which the Army fights to a kind of *method,* which is very necessary as well as salutary, because a great number of the Generals of second order, and other officers at the head of smaller units, have little knowledge of tactics, and no special aptitude at all for War.

By this, a certain methodicism is instituted which takes the place of art, where the latter is wanting. My persuasion is that this exists to the greatest degree in the French Army.

(6) According to what has been said respecting the use of the different arms of the service, this order of battle for a Brigade would be something like the following:



a, b is a line of light infantry which opens the battle, and in a broken uneven country serves in some measure as an advance-guard; then comes the artillery, *c, d,* intended to be placed in battery at advantageous points. Until put in position, it remains behind the first line of infantry. *e, f* is the first line of infantry, intended to deploy and open fire; in this case it is formed of four battalions; *g, h,* two regiments of cavalry; *i, k,* the

second line of infantry, which constitutes the reserve intended to decide the result of the battle. *l, m,* its cavalry.

According to the same principles, a similar disposition may be established for a Corps of larger proportions: at the same time it is not essential that the order adopted should be precisely that now laid down, it may differ in some respects, so that it is in conformity with the foregoing principles. Thus, for instance, the usual position of the cavalry, *g, h,* may be in the line *l, m,* and then it is only brought forward when it is found to be too far in rear at *l, m.*

(7) The Army consists of several such independent Corps, which have their Generals and Staff. They are drawn up in line, or one behind another, according as that may be prescribed by the general principles for the combat. One thing we have still to add, which is, that if we are not too weak in cavalry, we should form a special reserve of that arm, which naturally will be placed quite in rear, and is for the following purposes:

(*a*) To press upon the enemy, if he retreats from the field, and to attack the cavalry which he employs in covering his retreat. If the enemy's cavalry is beaten at that moment, great results must follow, unless the enemy's infantry performs prodigies of valour. Small bodies of cavalry will not answer the purpose on such an occasion.

(*b*) To hasten the pursuit of the enemy if, without being beaten, he makes a retreat; or if, after a lost battle, he continues to retire on the following day. Cavalry marches quicker than infantry, and is more dreaded by troops that are retreating. And next to beating the enemy, the pursuit is the most important thing in War.

(*c*) If our object is to make a great turning movement (to turn the enemy Strategically), and on account of the *détour* we must employ an arm which marches quicker, then we may take this reserve cavalry for the purpose.

In order to make this Corps more independent, horse artillery should be attached to it; for there is greater strength in a combination of several arms.

(8) The order of battle for the troops has relation to the battle; it is their disposition for that end.

The order of march is, in its essentials, as follows:

(*a*) Each complete unit (whether Brigade or Division) has its own advance- and rear-guard, and forms a column of itself; that does not, however, prevent several such units from marching on the same road one after another, and thus, to a certain extent, forming as a whole one great column.

(*b*) The units march according to their position in the general order of battle; that is to say, according as their appointed place in that order may happen to be in line with, or in rear of, each other, so they march.

(*c*) In the columns themselves the following order is invariably observed: the light infantry form the advance- and rear-guards, accompanied by a proportion of cavalry; then follows the infantry; then the artillery; last of all, the rest of the cavalry.

This order is kept, whether we move against the enemy—in which case it is the natural order—or parallel with the enemy, in which case, properly, those who in the order of battle are to stand behind one another should march side by side. If we have to form line of battle, there can never be want of time to such a degree that we cannot withdraw the cavalry and the second line by one flank or the other.

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3.—

PRINCIPLES FOR THE USE OF GROUND

(1) The *terrain* (the ground or country) gives two advantages in War.

The first is, that obstacles to approach are thus presented which either render it impossible for an enemy to reach certain points, or compel him to march slowly to keep in column, &c.

The second is, that obstacles of ground enable us to conceal the position of our troops.

Both advantages are very important, but the second appears to me the greatest: at all events it is certainly the one which we can most frequently make use of, because, even the most level country, in most cases, still allows of drawing up troops more or less under cover.

Formerly, the first of these advantages was almost the only one known, and very little use was made of the second. Now the mobility of all Armies is such, that the first is of less service, and just on that account we must make use the more frequently of the second. The first of these two advantages is only serviceable in the defensive, the second, in both attack and defence.

(2) The ground, considered as an obstacle to approach, is of use chiefly in the following points: (*a*) as a support for the flanks, (*b*) as a means of strengthening the front.

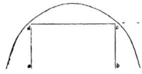
(3) As a fit support for a flank, an obstacle should be quite impassable—such as a large river, a lake, an impassable swamp. These are all impediments which are rarely met with, and therefore perfect supports for the flanks are seldom to be found, and the want of them is felt now more frequently than formerly, because Armies move more, do not remain so long in one position, consequently require a greater number of positions in the theatre of War.

If the obstacle to approach is not an impassable barrier, then it is, properly speaking, no *point d'appui* for a flank, it is only a point which strengthens the position. Troops must then be placed behind it, and then again it becomes in relation to these an obstacle to approach.

It is certainly always of advantage to strengthen the flanks in this manner, as fewer troops are then required at those points; but we must take precautions against two things: the first is, placing too much reliance on such supports for the flank, and thus neglecting to have strong reserves behind them; the second is, covering both wings with obstacles of this description, for as they do not completely secure either, they do not prevent the possibility of a combat on both flanks; this may easily become a most disadvantageous defensive, for the obstacles will not allow us easily to sally forth

with an active defence on one wing, and thus we may be reduced to defend ourselves in the most unfavourable of all forms, with both flanks thrown back, *a d, c b.*

(4) These considerations lead again to the deep order



of battle. The less we are able to find secure support for the wings, the more troops we must have in rear, with which we may in turn outflank any portion of the enemy's army which shall seek to act against our flank.

(5) All kinds of ground which cannot be passed by troops marching in line, all villages, all enclosures of parcels of ground by hedges and ditches, marshy meadows, lastly, all hills which can only be mounted with some difficulty, come under the head of hindrances of this kind, that is, of obstacles that cannot be passed except with difficulty, and slowly; and which, therefore, add greatly to the strength of the troops posted behind them in the combat. Woods can only be included in this category when the underwood is very thick and the ground marshy. A common wood of high trees is as easy to pass as a plain. There is one point, however, in respect to a wood which must not be overlooked, that is, that it may serve to conceal the enemy. If we place ourselves inside it, then there is the same disadvantage for both sides; but it is very dangerous, and at the same time a great mistake to have woods in front or on the flank.* Such a thing can never be allowable unless there are very few roads by which they can be traversed. Abattis intended to bar the passages are so easily removed that they are not of much use.

(6) From all this it follows that we should endeavour to make use of such obstacles upon one flank, in order to offer there a relatively strong resistance with few troops, whilst we carry out our intended offensive on the other flank. With these obstacles, the use of entrenchments may be combined with great advantage, because then, if the enemy passes the obstacle, the fire from the entrenchments may secure our weak force from being overwhelmed by superior numbers, and thrown back too suddenly.

(7) When we are on the defensive, every obstacle covering our front is of great value.

All hills on which positions are taken up are only occupied on this account; for an elevated position has seldom any important influence, often none at all, on the effect of the arms in use. If we stand above the enemy as he approaches, he must ascend with difficulty, therefore he advances only slowly, his ranks get into disorder, and he reaches us with his physical powers exhausted, advantages for us which, with equal bravery and numbers on each side, ought to be decisive. The great effect morally of a rapid charge at full speed is a point which must not on any account be overlooked. The soldier who is advancing becomes insensible even to danger, the one who is standing still loses his presence of mind. It is therefore always advantageous to place the first lines of infantry and artillery on high ground.

If the slope of the hill is so steep, its declivity so broken and uneven, that we cannot sweep it well with our fire, which is often the case, then, instead of placing our front

line on the summit ridge, that part should at most only be occupied by skirmishers, and the full line should be so placed on the reverse slope, that at the moment when the enemy reaches the summit ridge and begins to rally his ranks he is exposed to the greatest fire.*

All other local features which form obstacles to approach, such as small rivers, streams, hollow ways, &c., serve to make breaks in the enemy's front. He must, after passing them, halt to re-form, and that delays him; therefore he should then be brought within range of our most effectual fire. The most effectual fire is case (400 to 600 yards), if there is plenty of artillery available; the fire of musketry (150 to 200 yards), if there is little artillery at hand.

(8) Through this it becomes a rule to include within the zone of our most effective fire every obstacle to approach with which we wish to strengthen our front. But, at the same time, it is important to observe that our whole defence should never depend entirely on our fire, but a considerable portion of our troops (one-third to one-half) should always be kept ready to attack with the bayonet. Therefore, if we are very weak, we must merely place the line of fire (riflemen and artillery) near enough to cover the obstacle with their fire, and place the rest of the troops in columns 600 or 800 yards further back, and if possible under cover.

(9) Another way of making use of obstacles to approach in front is to let them be a little further in front of our line, so that they shall be within the effective range of cannon-shot (1000 to 2000 yards), and if the enemy's columns pass them, then to attack him from all sides. (At Minden, the Duke Ferdinand did something like this.) In this manner an obstacle of ground is favourable to the plan of actively defending ourselves; and this active defence, of which we have already spoken elsewhere, then takes place on our front.

(10) In the preceding observations, obstacles of ground and country have been considered chiefly as connected lines in relation to extensive positions, but it is necessary to say something about single points.

Isolated points in general can only be defended either by entrenchments or by a strong natural obstacle of ground. Of the first we do not speak at present. Obstacles of ground which, standing isolated, may have to be defended can only be—

(*a*) Isolated steep Heights.

In this case, entrenchments are indispensable, because the enemy can always advance against the defender with a front more or less extended, and the defender must then at last be taken in rear, because he will rarely be strong enough to show a front on all sides.

(*b*) Defiles.

Under this term we include every narrow way forming the only approach by which the enemy can reach a particular point. Bridges, embankments, rocky gulleys with precipitous sides, belong to this class.

In respect to all these cases it is to be observed, that either it is impossible for the assailant to turn the obstacle—as, for instance, a bridge over a great river, in which case the defender may then boldly use all his force in order to bring as much fire as possible to bear on the point of passage—or we are not secure against the obstacle being turned—as in the case of bridges over small streams, and the greater number of mountain defiles; then it is necessary to reserve a considerable part of the force (one-third to one-half) for an attack in close order.

(*c*) Buildings and Enclosures, Villages, small Towns, &c.

If troops are brave, and carry on a War with enthusiasm, there is no place or condition of things in which a few can so well resist many as in the defence of houses. But if we are not quite certain of the men individually, it is better only to occupy the houses, gardens, &c., with riflemen, and to plant guns at the approaches, and to draw up the greater part of the troops (one-third to one-half) in close column, in the place itself, or behind it under cover, in order to rush upon the enemy with this reserve when he attempts to enter.

(11) These isolated posts serve the great operations partly as outposts, not intended to offer an absolute defence, but mostly only to detain the enemy, partly as points which are of importance in the combinations planned for the whole Army. It is also often necessary to hold a distant point, in order to gain time for the development of active defensive measures which we have in view. If the point is remote, it is naturally on that account isolated.

(12) It is only now necessary to add two remarks concerning isolated points, the first is, that we must hold troops in readiness behind these points for the detachments to rally upon in case of being driven out; the second is, that whoever includes such a defence in the series of his combinations should never reckon too much upon it, let the strength of the natural obstacles of ground be ever so great; that, on the other hand, whoever is entrusted with the defence must determine to carry out the object, let circumstances be ever so adverse to him. For this, a spirit of resolution and self-devotion is required which can only spring from a thirst for glory and from enthusiasm: for this reason, men must be chosen for such duties who are not deficient in these noble qualities of the soul.

(13) All that concerns the use of the ground as a means for covering our position and our march up to occupy it requires no elaborate exposition.

We do not now place ourselves *on* a hill we wish to defend (as was often done formerly) but *behind it:* we do not place ourselves *before* a wood, but *in it,* or *behind* it; the latter only when we can overlook the wood or thicket. We keep our troops in columns that they may be the more easily concealed; we take advantage of villages, plantations, all undulations of the ground, in order to conceal our troops behind them; in advancing we choose the most broken intersected country,* &c.

In cultivated countries there are hardly any localities so much overlooked that it is not possible by a skilful use of such obstacles and features as the ground presents to keep

a great part of the troops on the defensive from being seen. For the assailant, there is more difficulty in keeping a march secret, because he must follow the main loads.

Of course, when the ground is made use of for purposes of concealment of troops, this must be done with a due regard to the end and the combinations which have been decided upon; therefore, in this we must take care above all things that we do not pull to pieces the order of battle, although some small deviations may be allowable.

(14) If we sum up what has now been said on ground, we deduce from it as respects the defensive, that is, the choice of positions, that the following points are those of most importance:

(*a*) Support of one or both flanks.

(*b*) Open view before front and flanks.

(*c*) Obstacles to the approach in front.

(*d*) Masked positions for troops.

To this is to be added—

(*e*) A broken country in rear, because that makes pursuit difficult in case of disaster; but no defiles too near (as at Friedland), for that causes delay and confusion.

(15) It would be pedantic to suppose that all these advantages are to be obtained at every position which it is necessary to take up in War. All positions are not of equal importance; their importance increases in proportion to the probability of our being attacked in them. It is only in the most important that we try to combine, if possible, all these advantages; in others we try to do so more or less.

(16) The considerations which the assailant has to study in respect to ground are principally embraced in two leading points: not to choose an over difficult country for the point of attack; and next, on all occasions to advance through the country so that the enemy can see as little as possible of our movements.

(17) I close these observations on the use of ground with a maxim of the highest importance for the defence, and which is to be regarded as the key-stone of the whole theory of defence, which is: *Not to expect everything from the strength of the ground, consequently never to be enticed into a passive defence by a strong country.* For if the country is in reality so strong that it is impossible for the assailant to drive us out of our position, he will turn it, which is always possible, and then the strongest country is useless; we are then compelled to fight under quite different circumstances, in quite a different country; and we might as well not have included the other locality in our combinations. But if the ground is not of such strength, if it is possible to attack it, still the advantages of such a position will never outweigh the disadvantages of a passive defence. All obstacles of ground must therefore only be taken advantage of for a partial defensive, in order to offer a relatively great resistance with few troops,

and to gain time for the offensive, by which the real victory is to be gained at other points.

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III.—

STRATEGY.

This is the combination of the singles battles of a War, in order to attain to the object of the campaign.

If we know how to fight, if we know how to conquer, there is not much more wanted; to combine successful results is easy, because it is merely an affair of a well-practised judgment, and does not depend, like the direction of a battle, on special knowledge.

All that is essential in the few principles which there are, and which depend chiefly on the constitution of States and Armies may, therefore, be brought within a small compass.

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1.—

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

(1) There are three principal objects in carrying on War:

(*a*) To conquer and destroy the enemy's armed force.

(*b*) To get possession of the material elements of aggression, and of the other sources of existence of the hostile Army.

(*c*) To gain public opinion.

(2) To attain the first of these objects, the chief operation must be directed against the enemy's principal Army, or at least against a very important portion of the hostile force; for it must be beaten before we can follow up the other two objects with success.

(3) In order to seize the material forces, operations are directed against those points at which those resources are chiefly concentrated: principal towns, magazines, great fortresses. On the road to these, the enemy's principal force, or a considerable part of his Army, will be encountered.

(4) Public opinion is ultimately gained by great victories, and by the possession of the enemy's capital.

(5) The first and most important maxim which we can set before us for the attainment of these objects is: to employ *all* the forces which we can make available with the *utmost* energy. In every modification which manifests itself in these respects, there is a shortcoming as respects the object. Even if the result is tolerably certain in itself, it is extremely unwise not to use the utmost efforts to make it *perfectly certain;* for these efforts can never produce injurious effects. Let the country suffer ever so much by it, no disadvantage can arise from that, because the pressure of the War is the sooner removed.

The moral impression produced by vigorous preparations is of infinite value; every one feels certain of success: this is the best means of raising the spirits of the Nation.

(6) The second principle is to concentrate our force as much as is possible at the point where the decisive blows are to be struck, to run the risk even of being at a disadvantage at other points, in order to make sure of the result at the decisive point. The success at that point will compensate for all defeats at secondary points.

(7) The third principle is: not to lose time. If no special and considerable advantage will arise by delay, it is important to commence work as quickly as possible. By

rapidity, many measures of the enemy are nipped in the bud, and public opinion is gained in our favour.

Surprise plays a much greater part in Strategy than in tactics; it is the most powerful element of victory; Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick II., Napoleon, owe the brightest rays of their fame to their promptitude.

(8) Lastly, the fourth principle is: to follow up the success we gain with the utmost energy.

The pursuit of the enemy when defeated is the only means of gathering up the fruits of victory.

(9) The first of these principles is the foundation of the three others. If we have followed the first principle, we can venture any length with respect to the others, without risking our all. It gives the means of continually creating new forces behind us, and with fresh forces every disaster may be repaired.

In this, and not in going forward with timid steps, lies that prudence which may be called wise.

(10) Small States, in the present day, cannot make any Wars of conquest; but, at the same time, for a defensive War, even their means are very great. Therefore I am perfectly convinced that hoever calls forth all his powers in order to appear incessantly with new masses, whoever adopts every imaginable means of preparation, whoever concentrates his force at the decisive point, whoever thus armed pursues a great object with resolution and energy, has done all that can be done in a general way for the strategical conduct of the War, and that unless he is altogether unfortunate in battle, he will undoubtedly be victorious in the same measure as his adversary has fallen short of this exertion and energy.

(11) Due attention being paid to these principles, the form in which the operations are carried on is in the end of little consequence. I shall, however, try to explain, in a few words, what is most important.

In tactics, we always seek to get round the enemy, that is to say, that portion of his force against which our principal attack is directed, partly because the convergent action of the combatant force is more advantageous than the parallel, partly because it is the only method of cutting the enemy off from his line of retreat.

If this, which relates to the enemy and his position tactically, issued strategically, and applied to the enemy’s theatre of War (therefore also to his subsistence lines), then the separate columns, or Armies, which should envelop the enemy, will be in most cases so far apart from each other that they cannot take part in one and the same battle. The enemy will be in the middle, and may be able to turn with the mass of his forces against these Corps singly, and beat them in detail. Frederick II.’s campaigns furnish examples of this, more especially those of 1757 and 1758.

Now as the battle is the principal affair, the decisive one, the party acting on converging lines, unless he has a most decisive superiority in numbers, will lose by battles all the advantages which the enveloping movement would have gained for him; for an operation against the lines of communication only takes effect very slowly, but victory in the battle very quickly.

Therefore, in Strategy, he who finds himself in the midst of his enemies is better off than his opponent who tries to envelop him, particularly if the forces on each side are equal, and of course still more so if there is an inferiority on the enveloping side.

A strategic enveloping or turning movement is no doubt a very effective means of cutting the enemy off from his line of retreat; but as this object may also just as well be attained by a tactical turning movement, the strategic enveloping movement is therefore never advisable unless we are (physically and morally) so superior, that we shall be strong enough at the decisive point, and yet can at the same time dispense with the detached corps.

Napoleon never engaged in attempts to turn his enemy strategically, although he was so often, indeed almost always, both physically and morally superior.

Frederick II. only did it once, in the attack on Bohemia, 1757. Certainly by that means the Austrians were prevented from bringing on a battle until they got to Prague; but what was the benefit to him of the conquest of Bohemia as far as Prague, without a decisive battle? The battle of Kollin forced him to give it up again—a proof that battles decide all. At Prague he was obviously in danger of being attacked by the whole of the Austrian forces before the arrival of Schwerin. He would not have exposed himself to this danger if he had marched through Saxony with all his forces united. The first battle would in that case probably have been fought at Budin on the Eger, and that would have been as decisive as the Battle of Prague. This concentric march into Bohemia was unquestionably a consequence of the Prussian Army having been broken up during the winter in cantonments in Silesia and Saxony, and it is of importance to observe, that reasons of this kind, in most cases, are more influential than the advantages in the form of the disposition itself, for the facility of operations is favourable to their rapid execution, and the friction inherent in the immense machinery of a great armed force is in any case so great that we should never add to it except from necessity.

(12) Besides this, the principle just stated, of concentrating as much as possible at the decisive point, is opposed to the idea of enveloping strategically, and the order of battle for our troops naturally springs from that principle of itself. On that account I said, with reason, that the form of the order of battle is of little consequence. There is, however, one case in which the operating strategically against the enemy's flank leads to great results, similar to those of a battle; that is, when in a poor or impoverished country the enemy, by great exertions, has formed large magazines, on the preservation of which his operations entirely depend. In such a case it may perhaps be advisable not to march with the mass of our forces against the enemy's principal force, but to push forward against his base. For this there are, however, two conditions requisite:

(*a*) That the enemy is so far from his base that he will be forced by this means to make a long retreat; and

(*b*) That with a few troops and the help of natural and artificial obstacles we shall be able to harass him in such a manner on the road which his principal force must take, that no conquests he can make in that direction will compensate for the loss of his base.

(13) The subsistence of troops being a condition which is indispensable in the conduct of War, it has a great influence on the operations of the War, particularly in this way, that it will only allow of the concentration of troops to a certain degree; and as it must be considered in the choice of the line of operations, therefore it has an influence in determining the theatre of War.

(14) The subsistence for troops is provided, whenever the state of a country allows of it, at the cost of the country, by requisitions.

According to the present mode of making War, Armies take up considerably more space than formerly. The formation of separate independent corps has made this possible without our being placed at a disadvantage if opposed to an enemy who is concentrated in the old manner (with 70,000 to 100,000 men) at one spot; for one of these Corps, organised as they now are, can sustain itself for some time against an enemy twice or three times superior in numbers; during this time other Corps arrive, and therefore, even if this Corps is actually beaten, it will not have fought in vain, as we have already observed elsewhere.

Accordingly, now, single Divisions or Corps take the field, marching separately either in line with each other, or in succession one after another, and only so far in connection that, if they belong to the same Army, they can take part in any battle which may occur.

This makes it practicable to subsist an Army for a time without magazines. It is facilitated by the organisation of the Corps itself, by its staff and its commissariat department.

(15) When important reasons (as for instance the position of the enemy's principal Army) do not decide otherwise, one should choose the richest and most productive provinces to operate in, for facility of subsistence promotes rapidity of movement. There is nothing which in importance surpasses the subsistence, except the position of the enemy's principal Army, which we are seeking, the situation of the capital city, or strong place which we wish to take. All other considerations, for instance, the advantageous form of drawing up the armed force (order of battle), of which we have already spoken, are, as a rule, much less important.

(16) In spite of this new method of subsisting, we are very far from being able to dispense with all magazines, and a wise Commander, even if the resources of the province are quite sufficient, will not neglect to form magazines behind him as a provision against unforeseen events, and so as to be able the more readily to

concentrate his strength at certain points. This is one of those measures of precaution which are no detriment to the main object.

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2.—

DEFENSIVE

(1) In political language, a defensive War is one which a State carries on to maintain its independence: in Strategy, a defensive War is a campaign in which we limit ourselves to contending with the enemy in a theatre of War which has been prepared by us for the purpose. Whether the battles we fight in this theatre of War are offensive or defensive makes no difference in this respect.

(2) We choose the strategic defensive chiefly when the enemy is superior in force. Naturally fortresses and entrenched camps, which are to be regarded as the chief preparations of a theatre of War, afford great advantages, to which may be added knowledge of the country and the possession of good maps and surveys. With these advantages, a small Army, or an Army which is based on a small State and limited resources, will be more in a condition to oppose the enemy than without the aid of such assistance.

There are besides the two following grounds upon which we may choose the defensive form of War by preference:

First.—If the poverty of the provinces surrounding our theatre of War makes our operations extremely difficult on account of the question of subsistence. In that case we escape the disadvantage, and the enemy must submit to it. This is, for instance, at this moment (1812) the case of the Russian Army.

Secondly.—If the enemy has greater advantages for carrying on the War. In a prepared theatre of War—which we know, where all the surrounding circumstances are in our favour—War is more easily conducted; there will not be so many faults committed. In this case, that is, when the little dependence to be placed on our troops and Generals compels us to resort to the defensive, we gladly combine the tactical defensive with the strategic, that is, we give battle in positions prepared beforehand; we do so further because there is less risk of our committing faults.

(3) In defensive War, just as much as in the offensive, a great object should be pursued. This can be nothing else than to annihilate the enemy’s Army, either in a battle, or by making his subsistence so difficult as to produce disorganisation and compel him to retreat, by which he must necessarily suffer considerable losses. Wellington’s campaign in the years 1810 and 1811 is an instance of this.

The defensive War, therefore, does not consist in an indolent waiting for events; we must only pursue the waiting-for system where there is a palpable and decisive utility in that mode of procedure. That sort of calm before a storm, whilst the offensive is gathering up new force for great blows, is extremely dangerous for the defender.

If the Austrians, after the battle of Aspern, had reinforced themselves to three times the strength of the French Emperor, which they certainly might have done, then the time of rest which took place before the battle of Wagram might have been advantageous to them, but only on that condition; as they did not do so, it was so much lost time for them, and it would have been wiser if they had taken advantage of Napoleon's critical position to reap the fruits of their success at Aspern.

(4) Fortresses are intended to occupy an important part of the enemy's Army in besieging them. This period must, therefore, be taken advantage of to beat the rest of the Army. Our battles should be fought *behind* our fortresses, not in *front* of them. At the same time, however, we must not quietly look on at their being captured, as Benningsen did during the siege of Dantzig.

(5) A great river, that is, one we cannot build a bridge across without considerable difficulty—rivers like the Danube below Vienna, and the Lower Rhine—affords a natural line of defence of which we can avail ourselves, not by distributing our forces equally along its banks, and seeking to hinder the passage absolutely, which is a dangerous measure, but by watching it, and when the enemy passes, then falling upon him from all sides just at the moment when he has not yet got all his forces under command, and is still hemmed in within a narrow space close to the river. The battle of Aspern is an instance. At the battle of Wagram the Austrians, without any necessity, allowed the French to get possession of far too much space, by which means they did away with the disadvantages peculiarly inherent to the passage of a river.

(6) Mountains are the second natural obstacles of ground which afford a good line of defence, as we can either have them in front, and only occupy them with a few light troops, treat them to a certain extent as a river which the enemy must cross, and as soon as he debouches with his single columns, fall upon one of them with our whole weight, or we may ourselves take position in the mountains. In the last case, we must only defend the single passes with small detachments, and a considerable part of the Army (a third or a half) must remain in reserve, in order to fall in superior numbers on any column which forces its way through. This great reserve must, however, not be split up with a view to absolutely preventing all the columns from passing, but we must, from the first, resolve to make use of it to attack that column which we suppose to be the strongest. If, in this way, we rout a considerable part of the enemy's force, the other columns which have forced their way through will of themselves retire again.

The formation of mountain ranges in general is such that about the centre of the masses there are plateaux or plains at a greater or less elevation, and the sides next to the level country are intersected by deep valleys forming the entrances or avenues. The defender, therefore, has in the mountains a district in which he can make rapid movements right or left, whilst the attacking columns are separated from each other by steep, inaccessible ridges. It is only a mountain mass of this kind that is well adapted for a good defence. If it is rugged and impassable generally throughout, so that the Corps on the defensive must be scattered and disconnected, then to undertake the defence with the principal Army is a dangerous measure, for under such

circumstances all the advantages are on the side of the assailant, who can fall upon any of the isolated posts with far superior numbers, as no pass, no single post is so strong that it cannot soon be taken by superior numbers.

(7) With regard to mountain warfare, it is specially to be observed that in it a great deal depends on the aptitude of subordinate officers, but still more on the high spirit which animates the ranks. Great skill in manœuvring is not here requisite, but a military spirit and a heart in the cause, for every one is more or less left to act independently; this is why national levies find their account in mountain warfare, for while they are deficient in the first quality, they possess the other in the highest degree.

(8) Lastly, in respect to the strategic defensive, it is to be observed that, while it is in itself stronger than the offensive, it should only be used to gain the first great result, and that if this object is attained, and peace does not immediately follow upon that, greater results can only be obtained by the offensive; for whoever remains always on the defensive exposes himself to the disadvantage of always carrying on the War at his own expense. No State can endure that for more than a certain time; and therefore, if it exposes itself to the blows of its adversary without ever striking in return, it is almost sure in the end to become exhausted, and be obliged to submit. We should therefore begin with the defensive, that we may with the more certainty end with the offensive.

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3.—

ATTACK.

(1) The strategic attack pursues the aim of the War directly, for it is aimed directly at the destruction of the enemy's armed force, whilst the strategic defence seeks to obtain this object partly only indirectly. From this it comes that the principles of the attack are already contained in the general principles of Strategy. Only two subjects require special mention.

(2) The first is, keeping the Army constantly complete in men and arms. To the defender, this is relatively easier, from the proximity of his resources. The assailant, although in most cases possessed of the resources of a powerful State, must bring his means more or less from a distance, and therefore, of course, with greater difficulty. That he may not run short in means, he must make such arrangements that the levy of recruits and transport of arms anticipate his wants in these respects. The roads on his line of operations must be incessantly covered with reinforcements and trains of supplies moving to the front; on those roads, military stations must be formed to expedite the transport.

(3) Even in the most prosperous circumstances, and with the greatest moral and physical superiority, the assailant must keep in view the possibility of a great change of fortune. For this reason, he must provide points on the line of operations suitable for refuge, in the event of his Army being beaten. Such are fortresses with entrenched camps, or simply entrenched camps.

Large rivers afford the best means of checking the pursuit of an enemy for a time. We should therefore secure the passages across them with bridge heads, surrounded with a girdle of strong redoubts.

For the defence of these points, and as garrisons for important towns and fortresses, troops, in greater or less number, must be left behind, according as we have to apprehend attacks from the enemy or the hostility of the inhabitants of the country. These, with the reinforcements coming up, form new Corps, which, in case of success, follow the Army, but in case of disaster are stationed at the points which have been fortified to secure the retreat.

Napoleon always showed great foresight in the provision he made in this manner in the rear of his Army; and in that way, even in his boldest operations, he incurred less risks than might be imagined at first sight.

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IV.—

ON THE PRACTICE IN WAR OF THE PRINCIPLES NOW LAID DOWN

(1) The principles of the Art of War are in themselves very simple, and are quite within the compass of sound, common sense; and although in tactics they rest rather more than in Strategy upon special knowledge, still even this knowledge is so limited that it can hardly be compared with any other science, either in diversity or extent. Learning and profound science are, therefore, not at all requisite, nor are even great powers of understanding. If any special faculty of the understanding, besides a practised judgment, is required, it is clear from all that precedes that it is a talent for artifice or stratagem. The exact contrary has been long maintained, but merely from a misplaced feeling of awe regarding the subject, and from the vanity of authors who have written on the subject. An impartial consideration must convince us of this: but experience tends to impress upon us this conviction still more forcibly. In the late Revolutionary War, many men have made themselves conspicuous as skilful Generals, often as Generals of the first order, without having had the benefit of any military education. As regards Condé, Wallenstein, Suwarrow,* and many others it is at least a very doubtful point whether these had enjoyed any either.

That the conduct itself of War is very difficult is a matter of no doubt; but the difficulty is not that special learning, or great genius, is required to comprehend the true principles of conducting War; that can be done by any well-organised head, with a mind free from prejudice, and not altogether ignorant of the subject. Even the application of these principles on a map, and on paper, presents no difficulty; and even a good plan of operations is still no great masterpiece. The great difficulty is *to adhere steadfastly in execution to the principles which we have adopted.*

The object of this concluding observation, is to fix attention on this difficulty, and to give your Royal Highness a lucid and distinct idea of it, for I look upon that as being the most important point which I can attain by this paper.

The whole conduct of War is like the action of a complicated machine, with an immense amount of friction; so that combinations which are easily made on paper can only be carried into execution by very great exertion.

Therefore the free will, the mind of the General, finds itself impeded in its action at every instant, and it requires a peculiar strength of mind and understanding to overcome this resistance. By this friction many a good idea is lost, and we are obliged to lay down a plain, simple scheme, when by a somewhat more complicated one greater results might be attained.

To enumerate the causes of this friction in full is perhaps not possible, but the following are the greatest:

(1) We always know much less of the actual condition and of the designs of the enemy than we assume on supposition in forming our plans; innumerable doubts rise up at the moment of the execution of a resolution, doubts caused by the dangers to which we see we are exposed, if it should prove that we have been much deceived in the conjectures we have formed. That feeling of anxiety which so easily seizes men in general in the execution of great designs then overpowers us, and from this state of anxiety to a state of irresolution, from that to half measures, is a short step not perceptible.

(2) Not only are we *uncertain* as to the strength of the enemy, but rumour (all intelligence which we receive through outposts, spies, or by accident) increases his numbers. The great masses of the people are timid by nature, and thereby danger is invariably exaggerated. All the influences brought to bear on the General, therefore, tend to give him a false impression of the strength of the enemy before him; and herein lies a new source of irresolution.

We cannot imagine the full extent of this uncertainty and it is, therefore, important to prepare for it beforehand.

If we have quietly reflected on everything beforehand, if we have impartially considered, if we have sought for and if we have made up our minds on the probabilities of the case, we should not be ready to give up at once the first opinion, but carefully criticise reports as they come in, compare several with each other, send out for further information, &c. Very often, by this means, false intelligence is detected on the spot; often the first information is confirmed; in both cases, therefore, we attain to certainty, and can form a resolution accordingly. If we cannot obtain this certainty, then we must say to ourselves that in War nothing can be carried out without a risk; that the nature of War never allows us thoroughly to see, at all times, which way we are going; that the probable will still always remain the probable, even if it does not strike upon our senses at once; and that if we have made judicious arrangements generally, we shall not be completely ruined at once, even if there is one error.

(3) The uncertainty as to the existing state of things at any given moment applies to our own Army as well as the enemy's. Our own Army can seldom be kept so concentrated that we can at any moment clearly command a view of all parts. Now, if we are disposed to be anxious, then new doubts will thus arise. We shall wish to wait and see, and a delay in the action of the whole is the inevitable consequence.

We must, therefore, feel so much confidence in the arrangements we have made as to believe that they will meet our expectations. To this belongs in a special manner a reliance on the subordinate Generals; we must, therefore, make it a rule to select officers upon whom we can rely, making every other conside ation give way to that. If we have made the dispositions which are suitable, if we have provided for contingent mishaps, and so arranged that in case such should occur during the execution of our measures we shall not be completely ruined, then we must step boldly forward through the night of uncertainty.

(4) When we want to carry on a War which causes a great strain upon our powers, then subordinate Generals and even the troops (if they are not used to War) will often find obstacles which they represent as insuperable. They will find the march too long, the fatigue too great, the subsistence impracticable. If we should listen to all these *difficulties,* as Frederick II. called them, we should soon have to succumb to them, and remain powerless and inactive instead of acting with force and energy.

To withstand all this, a degree of confidence in our own sagacity and convictions is requisite, which commonly looks like obstinacy at the moment, but which is that power of the understanding and character which we call firmness.

(5) None of the effects upon which we calculate in War come to pass so exactly as any one would imagine who has not watched War attentively and been accustomed to it in reality.

We often make a mistake of several hours as to the march of a column, and yet we are unable to tell where to fix the cause of the delay; obstacles often present themselves which could not be calculated upon beforehand; often we expect to arrive at a certain point with an Army, and find ourselves obliged to halt some miles short of it; often a post which we have established renders much less service than we expected; one of the enemy's, on the contrary, much more; often the resources of a province do not amount to as much as we anticipated, &c.

Any such obstruction can only be got over by great efforts, which the General can only succeed in getting by strictness bordering on severity. Only by such means, only when he is certain that the utmost possible will be done, can he feel secure that these little impediments will not exercise a great influence on his operations, that he will not fall short of the object which he proposed to attain.

(6) We may feel certain that an Army is never in the condition in which a person following its operations in a room supposes it to be. If he is in favour of the Army, he will figure it to himself as being from a third to a half stronger and better than it really is. It is natural enough that the Commander should find himself in the same case in relation to the first plan of his operations, that he should afterwards see his Army melt away in a manner he never anticipated, his artillery and cavalry become unserviceable &c. Thus, what appeared to the observer and the General as possible and easy at the opening of the campaign, will often prove difficult or impossible in the execution. Now, if the Commander is a man who, impelled by a lofty ambition, still follows his object with boldness and energetic will, then he will attain it, whilst an ordinary man will think himself fully justified in abandoning it, owing to the condition of his Army.

Massena showed, in Genoa and in Portugal, the power which a General has over his troops through the strength of his will; in the one case by the force, we might say the severity, of his character, he drove the men to extraordinary exertions, which were crowned with success; in the other, in Portugal, he held out, at least, much longer than any one else would have done.

In most cases, the enemy's Army finds itself in a similar condition; think of Wallenstein and Gustavus Adolphus at Nuremberg, of Napoleon and Benningsen after the battle of Eylau. The state of the enemy we do not see, our own is before our eyes; therefore the latter makes a much greater impression than the former, because in ordinary mortals *sensuous impressions* are more powerful than the *language of the understanding.*

(7) The subsistence of the troops in whatever way it may be managed (whether by magazines or requisitions), presents such difficulties that it must always have a very decisive voice in the choice of measures. It is often opposed to the most effectual combination, and an Army is sometimes compelled to go in quest of its subsistence when it might be on the way to victory, to brilliant successes. Through this, chiefly, the whole machine acquires that unwieldiness by which the effects realised fall far short of the flight of great plans.

A General who, with a tyrannical power, demands from his troops the utmost efforts, the most extreme hardships; an Army accustomed to these sacrifices through Wars of long duration—what advantages will they not have over their opponents, how much more rapidly will they pursue their object in spite of all obstacles! With equally good plans, how different will be the result!

(8) Generally, and in all the foregoing cases, we cannot keep our eyes too intently fixed on the following truth:

The *sensuous impressions* which come before us in the course of execution are more vivid than those obtained previously through *mature reflection.* They are, however, only first appearances of things, and that, as we know, seldom corresponds exactly with reality. We are, therefore, in danger of sacrificing our mature reflection to first appearances.

That this first appearance, as a rule, produces fear and over caution is owing to the natural timidity of man, who takes only a partial view of everything.

Against this we must, therefore, arm ourselves, and place a firm reliance on the results of our own past *mature reflections,* in order to fortify ourselves by that means against the weakening impressions of the moment.

In this difficulty of execution a great deal depends on the certainty and firmness of our own convictions; on that account, therefore, the study of military history is important, because by it we learn the thing itself, we see the development of events themselves. The principles which we have learnt by theoretical instruction are only suited to facilitate the study of and direct our attention to the points of greatest importance in military history.

Your Royal Highness must therefore make yourself acquainted with these principles, with a view to proving them by the study of military history, and seeing where they coincide with the course of actual events, and where they are modified or overthrown by the same.

But besides this, the study of military history is the only means of supplying the place of actual experience, by giving a clear idea of that which we have termed the friction of the whole machine.

To this end we must not confine ourselves to the leading events, much less keep to the reasoning of historians, but study details as much as is possible. For historians rarely make perfect fidelity of representation their object: in general, they desire to embellish the deeds of their Army, or to prove a consonance between actual events and some imaginary rules. They invent history, instead of writing it. Much reading of history is not required for the above object. The knowledge of a few separate battles, in their details, is more useful than a general knowledge of several campaigns. On this account it is more advantageous to read particular narratives and journals than regular works of history. The account of the defence of Menin, in the year 1794, in the memoirs of General Scharnhorst, is a pattern of this kind of narration which cannot be surpassed. This narrative, especially the account of the sortie and the mode in which the garrison cut their way through the enemy, will serve your Royal Highness as a criterion for the style in which military history should be written.

No battle in the world has more thoroughly convinced me that in War we should not despair of success up to the last moment, and that the effects of good principles, which can never manifest themselves in such a regular manner as we suppose, will unexpectedly make their appearance, even in the most desperate cases, when we believe any such influences are completely lost.

Some great sentiment must stimulate great abilities in the General, either ambition, as in Cæsar, hatred of the enemy, as in Hannibal, the pride of falling gloriously, as in Frederick the Great.

Open your heart to a feeling of this kind. Be bold and astute in your designs, firm and persevering in executing them, determined to find a glorious end, and destiny will press on your youthful brow a radiant crown—fit emblem of a Prince, the rays of which will carry your image into the bosom of your latest descendants.

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ON THE ORGANIC DIVISION OF ARMED FORCES*

That the grounds which determine the division and strength of the different parts of an Army, and which have their root in elementary tactics, are not very distinct, and allow of much that is arbitrary, we must suppose, if we look at the various modes of formation which actually exist; but no great reflection is required to convince us that these grounds cannot determine the matter more exactly. What is usually adduced in relation to the subject, as, for instance, if a cavalry officer tries to prove that a cavalry regiment can never be too strong, *because otherwise it is not in a condition to do anything,* deserves no serious notice. This is the state of things as regards the small divisions with which elementary tactics is concerned—that is, Companies, Squadrons, Battalions, and Regiments; but it is much worse still with the larger divisions which are beyond elementary tactics, and where the question depends on higher tactics or the theory of the dispositions for a battle in conjunction with Strategy. We shall now take up the subject of these greater divisions—Brigades, Divisions, Corps, and Armies.

Let us first consider for a moment the reasonable grounds (the philosophy) of the thing. Why are the masses, as a universal rule, divided into parts? Plainly because one person can only exercise direct command over a limited number. The General cannot take 50,000 soldiers and place each man upon a particular spot and keep him there, and order him to do this and not to do that, which, if such a thing was conceivable, would plainly be the best thing that could be done; for none of the countless subordinate Commanders ever intensifies (at least it would be an anomaly if he did), but each more or less diminishes the force of the original order, and takes from the first idea something of its original precision. Besides this, if there are a number of subordinate divisions, the order takes considerably more time to reach its destination. From this it follows that the divisions and subdivisions, by reason of which orders must pass through many hands in succession, constitute *a necessary evil.* Here ends our philosophy, and we enter upon tactics and Strategy.

A mass entirely isolated which is opposed to the enemy as an independent whole, whether great or small, has three parts which are essential, and without which such a body can hardly be imagined, that is to say, one part which it throws out in advance, one which in case of unforeseen events it places in rear, and the main body between these two parts.

a.
b.
c.

Therefore, if the division of the greater whole is made with a view to independence, it must never have less than three parts if the permanent Division is to be in accordance with that constant requirement of independence which must naturally be an object. But it is easy to observe that even these three parts do not constitute quite a natural arrangement; for no one would willingly make his advance and rear guards each of the same strength with the centre or main body. Therefore, it would be more natural to conceive the centre as consisting of at least two parts, consequently, to make a division of the whole into four parts in this order:

a.
b. c.
d.

But even here it is plain we have not yet got to the most natural point. For, notwithstanding the depth which it is usual now to give an order of battle, all distributions of forces, either tactical or strategic, invariably assume the linear form; consequently, there arises of itself the want of a right wing, of a left wing, and of a centre, and five may therefore now be looked upon as the natural number of divisions in this form:

a.
b. c. d.
e.

This formation now allows of one, or in case of urgent necessity, of two parts of the principal mass being detached right or left. Whoever, like myself, is a friend of strong reserves, will perhaps find the part in rear (reserve) too weak in relation to the whole, and, therefore, will add, on that account, another part, in order to have one-third in reserve. Then the whole will be organised as under:

a.
b. c. d.
e. f.

If the force we have to organise is very large, a considerable Army, then Strategy has to remark that such an Army almost always finds it necessary to detach parts to the right and left; that, therefore, on this account with such a force, two more parts must generally be added; we then get the following strategic figure:

a.
b. c. d. e. f.
g. h.

From this we deduce as a result, that a whole mass of troops should never be divided into less than three or more than eight parts. But still in this there appears very little that is definite, for what a number of different combinations may be made, if we reflect that we might divide an Army into 3 × 3 × 3, if we should base Corps, Divisions, and Brigades upon that number, which would give twenty-seven Brigades, or into any other possible product of the given factors.

But there are still some important points remaining for consideration.

We have not entered upon the strength of Battalions and Regiments, leaving that for elementary tactics; from what has just been said, it only follows that we should make the Brigades consist of not less than three Battalions. Upon this we certainly insist, and shall probably not encounter any opposition; but it is more difficult to limit the *greatest* strength which the Brigade should have. As a rule a Brigade is considered to be such a body as can and must be guided by one man directly—that is to say, through the instrumentality of his voice. If we adhere *to that,* then it should not exceed a strength of 4000 or 5000 men; and, consequently, will consist of six or eight Battalions, according to the strength of the battalion. But here we must bring in another subject, which forms a new element in the inquiry. This element is the combination of the different arms. That this combination should begin in a body of troops lower down the steps than a whole Army is a point on which there is but one opinion throughout Europe. But some would only commence with it in Corps, that is, masses of 20,000 to 30,000 men. Others would have it in Divisions—that is, masses

of from 8000 to 12,000 men. We shall not enter into this controversy at present, but confine ourselves to this, which will hardly be disputed, that the independence of any body of troops is chiefly constituted by the combination of the three arms, and that, therefore, at all events for Divisions which are destined to find themselves frequently isolated in War, this combination is very desirable.

Further, we have not only to take into consideration the combination of all three arms, but also that of two of them, namely, artillery and infantry. This combination, according to the generally prevailing custom, takes place very much sooner, although artillerymen, excited by the example of cavalrymen, show no slight inclination to form again a little Army of their own. They have, however, as yet been obliged to content themselves with being divided amongst the Brigades. Through this combination, therefore, of artillery with infantry, the idea of a Brigade takes a somewhat different form, and the only question to be considered is, what should be the minimum size of a body of infantry to which, as a rule, a portion of artillery must always be attached in a permanent manner?

This question is more readily answered than one would at first sight suppose, for the number of guns which, for every 1000 men, we can take into the field, seldom depends on our will, it is settled by a variety of other, partly very remote, causes; then, again, the number of guns which are united in a battery rests upon much more substantial tactical grounds than any other similar organisation; thus it is that we do not ask, How many guns shall this mass of infantry (for instance, a Brigade) have? but, What mass of infantry is to be joined to a battery of artillery? If we have, for example, three guns per 1000 men with the Army, and then deduct one for the reserve, there remain two to distribute amongst the rest of the troops, which allows a mass of 4000 infantry for a battery of eight guns. As this is the ordinary proportion, it is evident that, with our calculation, we come nearly to what has been found to answer best in practice. After this, we shall add no more in regard to the size of a Brigade than that it should consist accordingly of from three to five thousand men.

Although the field of division is limited on one side in this way, and on the other it was already limited by the strength of the Army as a given quantity, a great number of combinations still always remain possible, and we cannot let them be disposed of at once by a rigorous application of the principle of the least possible number of parts; we have still to take into consideration some points of a general nature and we must also allow special considerations in particular cases to have their rights.

First we must observe that great bodies must be split into more parts than smaller ones, in order to be made sufficiently handy (as already noticed), and that small bodies with too many subdivisions or branches are not easy to handle.

If an Army is formed into two principal Corps, each of which has its own special Commander,* that is as much as to neutralise the Command-in-Chief. Every one who has military experience will understand this without any further elucidation. It is not much better if the Army is divided into three parts, for in such a case there can be no expeditious movements, no suitable dispositions for a battle, without an incessant

breaking up of these three principal Corps, by which their Commanders are very soon put out of temper.

The greater the number of parts the greater becomes the power of the Commander-in-Chief and the mobility of the whole mass. There is, therefore, a reason for going as far as possible in this direction. As there are more means of putting orders in a train for execution at a headquarters like that of the Commander of an Army than with the limited staff of a Corps or Division, therefore, on general grounds, it is best to divide an Army into not less than eight parts. If other circumstances require it, this number of parts may be increased to nine or ten. If there are more than ten parts, a difficulty arises in transmitting orders with the necessary rapidity and exactitude, for we must not forget that it is not the mere question of the order, else an Army might have as many Divisions as there are heads in a company, but that with orders, many directions and inquiries are connected which it is easier to arrange for six or eight Divisions than for twelve or fifteen.

Again, a Division if it is small as regards absolute strength in numbers, one which therefore may be supposed to form part of a Corps, can always make shift with fewer parts than we have given as the normal number; quite easily with four, in case of urgency with three. Six and eight would be inconvenient, because its means are not sufficient to transmit orders rapidly enough to so many parts.

This revision of our proper normal number gives as a result that an Army should have at least five parts, and not more than ten; that the Division should not have above five, and may be reduced to four. Between the two now lies the Corps, and both the question of its strength and the general question whether it should exist at all, depend on the adjustment of the other two combinations.

Two hundred thousand men in ten Divisions, and the Division split into five Brigades, gives the Brigade a strength of 4000 men. In such a force we could, thereore, do very well with Divisions only.

We could certainly divide this force into five Corps, the Corps into four Divisions, and the Division into four Brigades, then each Brigade would be 2500 men strong.

To me, the first arrangement appears the best; for, in the first place, it has one step less in the gradation of ranks, therefore orders are transmitted quicker, &c. Secondly, five branches are too few for an Army, it is not sufficiently pliable with that number; the same applies to a Corps divided into four Divisions, and 2500 men form a weak Brigade, of which there are in this scheme eighty, instead of which the other organisation makes only fifty, and is therefore simpler. These advantages are sacrificed for the sake of having only to give orders direct to five Generals instead of ten.

So far general considerations extend, but the points which require to be determined in particular cases are of infinite importance.

Ten Divisions may be easily commanded in a level country; in widely extended mountain positions the thing may be perfectly impossible.

A great river which divides an Army creates a necessity for the appointment of a separate Commander on one side. General rules are powerless against the force of circumstances in all such particular cases; however, it is to be remarked that when such special circumstances make their appearance, those disadvantages, which a multiplicity of Divisions otherwise produces, generally disappear at the same time. Certainly, even here abuses may arise, as for instance, if a bad organisation is made to gratify the unseasonable ambition of individuals, or, out of want of firmness, to resist personal considerations. But, however far the requirements of particular cases may extend, still experience teaches us that the system of divisioning as a rule is dependent on general principles.

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SKETCH OF A PLAN FOR TACTICS, OR THE THEORY OF THE COMBAT

(*N.B.—According to this distribution, this first part is to be revised and completed*)

I.—

INTRODUCTION: DEFINITION OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CONCEPTIONS OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS.

II.—

GENERAL THEORY OF THE COMBAT.

(*Combat—Cantonments—Camps—Marches.*)

(1) Nature of the combat—Active elements in the same—Hatred and hostility—Modification—Other moral forces—Judgment and talent.

(2) More precise definition of a combat—Independent combat—Partial combat—How the latter arise.

(3) Object of the combat: Victory—Degree, splendour, and weight of victory.

(4) Causes of victory, that is, of the enemy leaving the field.

(5) Kinds of combat according to arms—Close combat—Fire combat.

(6) Different acts of the combat—Destructive act—Decisive act.

(7) Kinds of combat, according as its motive is positive or negative—Attack and defence.

(8) Plan of the combat—Strategic object of the combat—Its aim—Means—Determination of the kind of combat—Time—Space—Reciprocal action—Conduct.

III.—

COMBATS; DEFINITE SUBDIVISIONS IN THE ABSTRACT. (***Formation—Order Of Battle—Elementary Tactics.***)

A.—

The Different Arms.

(1) Infantry. {	Effects produced in action by each arm—The formation and
(2) Artillery. {	Elementary tactics of each in attack and defence based on those
(3) Cavalry. {	effects.

B.—

The Different Arms Combined In Attack And Defence.

(1) Theory of the combination of arms:

(*a*) Infantry and Artillery.
(*b*) Infantry and Cavalry.
(*c*) Cavalry and Artillery.
(*d*) All three united.

(2) Fixed Divisions which are formed out of them:

(*a*) Brigades. }	
(*b*) Divisions. }	Their order of battle, position, movement, combat.
(*c*) Corps. }	
(*d*) Armies. }	

IV.—

BATTLES IN CONNECTION WITH COUNTRY AND GROUND.

A.—

On The Influence Of Ground And Combat In General.

(1) On the defensive.

(2) On the attack.

N.B.—*Our reflections must here leave the proper logical chain, on account of practical considerations.*The Ground*must be taken into view as soon as possible, and this cannot be done without our at once imagining to ourselves thecombat as taking place under one of the two forms, attack or defence; this is why the two subjects merge into one.*

B.—

General Theory Of The Defence.

C.—

Ditto, Ditto, Attack.

D.—

Defensive Combats Of Definite Bodies.

(1) Of a small number of troops. (2) Of a Brigade. (3) Of a Division. (4) Of a Corps. (5) Of an Army.

E.—

Offensive Combats Of Definite Bodies.

(1) Of a small number of troops. (2) Of a Brigade. (3) Of a Division. (4) Of a Corps. (5) Of an Army.

V.—

COMBATS WITH DEFINITE OBJECTS.

A.—

Defence.

(1) Measures of security.

(*a*) Guards. (*b*) Patrols. (*c*) Supports. (*d*) Small posts. (*c*) Chains of advanced posts. (*f*) Intermediate posts. (*g*) Advance guards. (*h*) Rear guards. (*i*) Advance Corps. (*k*)

Covering the flanks on the march. (*l*) Detachments to procure intelligence. (*m*) Detachments of observation. (*n*) Reconnaissances.

(2) Covering:

(*a*) Of single posts. (*b*) Of convoys. (*c*) Of foraging parties.

(3) Lines of posts—Diversity of objects:

(*a*) In mountains. (*b*) Along rivers. (*c*) Near morasses. (*d*) In woods.

(4) Battles—Diversity of objects—Destruction of the enemy's armed force—Possession of country—Mere moral ascendancy—Credit of arms.

(*a*) Defensive battle without preparation. (*b*) In a prepared position. (*c*) In an entrenched position.

(5) Retreats:

(*a*) The simple retreat (the retiring) in presence of the enemy; *a a,* before a battle; *a b,* in the course of the same; *a c,* after a battle. (*b*) Strategic retreat, that is, several consecutive simple retreats, in their tactical dispositions.

B.—

The Attack.

(1) Divided and treated according to the objects of the defence.

(2) According to the particular objects of the attack:

(*a*) Surprise. (*b*) Cutting through the enemy.

VI.—

OF CAMPS AND CANTONMENTS.

VII.—

OF MARCHES.

GUIDE TO TACTICS, OR THE THEORY OF THE COMBAT

I.—

GENERAL THEORY OF THE COMBAT

Object Of The Combat

(1) What is the object of the combat?

(*a*) Destruction of the enemy's armed forces.
(*b*) To gain possession of some object.
(*c*) Merely victory for the credit of our arms.
(*d*) Two of these objects, or all three taken together.

Theory Of Victory

(2) Any of these four objects can only be obtained by a *victory.*

(3) Victory is the retirement of the enemy from the field of battle.

(4) The enemy is moved to this:

(*a*) If his loss is excessive,
(i) and he therefore fears he will be overpowered,
(ii) or finds that the object will cost him too much.
(*b*) If the formation of his Army, consequently the efficiency of the whole, is too much shaken.
(*c*) If he begins to get on disadvantageous ground, and therefore has to fear excessive loss if he continues the combat. (In this is therefore included the loss of the position.)
(*d*) If the form of the order of battle is attended with too great disadvantages.
(*e*) If he is taken by surprise in any way, or suddenly attacked, and therefore has not time to make suitable dispositions to give his measures their proper development.
(*f*) If he perceives that his opponent is too superior to him in numbers.

(*g*) If he perceives that his opponent has too great a superiority in moral forces.

(5) In all these cases a Commander may give up the combat, because he has no hope of matters taking a favourable turn, and has to apprehend that his situation will become still worse than it is at present.

(6) Except upon one of these grounds a retreat is not justifiable, and, therefore, cannot be the decision of the General or Commander.

(7) But a retreat can be made in point of fact without his will.

(*a*) If the troops, from want of courage or of good will, give way.
(*b*) If a panic drives them off.

(8) Under these circumstances, the victory may be conceded to the enemy against the will of the Commander, and even when the results springing from the other relations enumerated from *a* to *f* incline in our favour.

(9) This case can and must often happen with small bodies of troops. The short duration of the whole act often hardly leaves the Commander time to form a resolution.

(10*a*) But with large masses, such a case can only occur with parts of the force, not easily with the whole. Should, however, several parts yield the victory thus easily to the enemy, a disadvantageous result for the whole may ensue in those respects noted from *a* to *e,* and thus the Commander may be compelled to resolve upon withdrawing from the field.

(10*b*) With a large mass, the disadvantageous relations specified under *a, b, c* and *d,* do not exhibit themselves to the Commander in the arithmetical sum of all partial disadvantages which have taken place, for the general view is never so complete, but they show themselves where, being compressed into a narrow compass, they form an imposing whole. This may be the case either with the principal body, or an important part of that body. The resolution then is decided by this predominant feature of the whole act.

(11) Lastly, the Commander may be prompted to give up the combat, and therefore to retreat for reasons which do not lie in the combat, but which may be regarded as foreign to it, such as intelligence, which does away with the object, or materially alters the strategic relations. This would be a breaking off of the combat, and does not belong to this place, because it is a strategic, not a tactical, act.

(12) The giving up of the combat is, therefore, an acknowledgment of the temporary superiority of our opponent, let it be either physically or morally, *and a yielding to his will.* In that consists the first moral force of victory.

(13) As we can only give up the combat by leaving the field of battle, therefore the retirement from the field is *the sign of this acknowledgment, the lowering of our flag* as it were.

(14) *But the sign of victory* still decides nothing as to its greatness, importance, or splendour. These three things often coincide, but are by no means identical.

(15) The greatness of a victory depends on the greatness of the masses over which it has been gained, as well as on the greatness of the trophies. Captured guns, prisoners, baggage taken, killed, wounded, belong to this. Therefore, over a small body of troops no great victory can be gained.

(16) The importance of the victory depends on the importance of the object which it secures to us. The conquest of an important position may make an insignificant victory very important.

(17) The splendour of a victory depends on the proportion which the number of trophies bears to the strength of the victorious Army.

(18) There are therefore victories of different kinds and of many different degrees. Strictly speaking, there can be no combat without a decision, consequently without a victory; but the ordinary use of language and the nature of the thing require that we should only consider those results of combats as victories which have been preceded by very considerable efforts.

(19) If the enemy contents himself with doing just sufficient to ascertain our designs, and as soon as he has found them out gives way, we cannot call that a victory; if he does more than that, it can only be done with a view to becoming conqueror in reality, and, therefore, in that case, if he gives up the combat, he is to be considered as conquered.

(20) As a combat can only cease by one or other or both of the parties who have been in contact retiring partially, therefore it can never be said, properly speaking, that both parties have kept the field. In so far, however, as the nature of the thing and the ordinary use of language require us to understand by the term battlefield the position of the principal masses of the contending Armies, and because the first consequences of victory only commence with the retreat of the *principal masses,* therefore there may be battles which remain quite indecisive.

The Combat Is The Means Of Gaining A Victory

(21) The means to obtain victory is the combat. As the points specified in No. 4 from *a* to *g* establish the victory, therefore also the combat is directed on those points as its immediate objects.

(22) We must now make ourselves acquainted with the combat in its different phases.

What Is An Independent Combat?

(23) In reality, every combat may be separated into as many single combats as there are combatants. But the individual only appears as a separate item when he fights singly, that is, independently.

(24) From single combats the units ascend to fresh units co-ordinately with the ascending scale of subdivisions of command.

(25) These units are bound together through the object and the plan, still not so closely that the members do not retain a certain degree of independence. This always becomes greater the higher the rank of the units. How this gain of independence on the part of the members takes place we shall show afterwards.

(26) Thus every total combat consists of a great number of separate combats in descending order of members (No. 97, &c.) down to the lowest member acting independently.

(27) But a total combat consists also of separate combats following one another in succession.

(28) All separate combats we call partial combats, and the whole of them a total combat; but we connect the conception of a whole combat with the supposed condition of a personal command, and therefore only that belongs to *one* combat which is directed by *one* will. (In cordon positions the limits between the two can never be defined.)

(29) What has been said here on the theory of combat relates to the total combat, as well as to the partial combat.

Principles Of The Combat

(30) Every fight is an expression of hostility, which passes into combat instinctively.

(31) This instinct to attack and destroy the enemy is the real element of War.

(32) Even amongst the most savage tribes, this impulse to hostility is not pure instinct alone; the reflecting intelligence supervenes, aimless instinct becomes an act with a purpose.

(33) In this manner the feelings are made submissive to the understanding.

(34) But we can never consider them as completely eliminated, and the pure object of reason substituted in their place; for if they were swallowed up in the object of reason, they would come to life again spontaneously in the heat of the combat.

(35) As our Wars are not utterances of the hostility of individuals opposed to individuals, so the combat seems to be divested of all real hostility, and therefore to be a purely reasonable action.

(36) But it is not so by any means. Partly there is never wanting a collective hatred between the parties, which then manifests itself more or less effectively in the individual, so that from hating and warring against a party, he hates and wars against the individual man as well; partly in the course of a combat itself a real feeling of hostility is kindled more or less in the individuals engaged.

(37) Desire of fame, ambition, self-interest, and *esprit de corps,* along with other feelings, take the place of hostility when that does not exist.

(38) Therefore, the mere will of the Commander, the mere prescribed object, is seldom or never the sole motive of action in the combatants; instead of that, a very notable portion of the emotional forces will always be in activity.

(39) This activity is increased by the circumstance of the combat moving in the region of danger, in which all emotional forces have greater weight.

(40) But even the intelligence which guides the combat can never be a power purely of the understanding, and, therefore, the combat can never be a subject of pure calculation.

(*a*) Because it is the collision of living physical and moral forces, which can only be estimated generally, but never subjected to any regular calculation.

(*b*) Because the *emotions* which come into play may make the combat a subject of enthusiasm, and through that a subject for higher judgment.

(41) The combat may therefore be an act of talent and genius, in opposition to calculating reason.

(42) Now the feelings and the genius which manifest themselves in the combat must be regarded as separate moral agencies which, owing to their great diversity and elasticity, incessantly break out beyond the limits of calculating reason.

(43) It is the duty of the Art of War to take account of these forces in theory and in practice.

(44) The more they are used to the utmost, the more vigorous and fruitful of results will be the combat.

(45) All inventions of art, such as arms, organisation, exercise in tactics, the principles of the use of the different arms in the combat, are restrictions on the natural instinct, which has to be led by indirect means to a more efficient use of its powers. But the emotional forces will not submit to be thus clipped, and if we go too far in trying to make instruments of them, we rob them of their impulse and force. There must, therefore, always be given them a certain room to play between the rules of theory

and its practical execution. This entails the necessity of a higher point of view, of great wisdom as respects theory, and great tact of judgment as respects practice.

Two Modes Of Fighting—Close Combat And Fire Combat

(46) Of all weapons which have yet been invented by human ingenuity, those which bring the combatants into closest contact, those which are nearest to the pugilistic encounter, are the most natural, and correspond with most instinct. The dagger and the battle-axe are more so than the lance, the javelin, or the sling.

(47) Weapons with which the enemy can be attacked while he is at a distance are more instruments for the understanding; they allow the feelings, the "instinct for fighting" properly called, to remain almost at rest, and this so much the more according as the range of their effects is greater. With a sling we can imagine to ourselves a certain degree of anger accompanying the throw, there is less of this feeling in discharging a musket, and still less in firing a cannon shot.

(48) Although there are shades of difference, still all modern weapons may be placed under one or other of two great classes, that is, the cut-and-thrust weapons, and fire-arms; the former for close combat, the latter for fighting at a distance.

(49) Therefore it follows that there are two modes of fighting—the close combat (hand-to-hand) and the combat with fire-arms.

(50) Both have for their object the destruction of the enemy.

(51) In close combat this effect is quite certain; in the combat with fire-arms it is only more or less probable. From this difference follows a very different signification in the two modes of fighting.

(52) As the destruction in hand-to-hand fighting is inevitable, the smallest superiority either through advantages or in courage is decisive, and the party at a disadvantage, or inferior in courage, tries to escape the danger by flight.

(53) This occurs so regularly, so commonly, and so soon in all hand-to-hand fights in which several are engaged, that the destructive effects properly belonging to this kind of fight are very much diminished thereby, and its principal effect consists rather in driving the enemy off the field than in destroying him.

(54) If, therefore, we look for the practical effect of close combat, we must place our object not in the *destruction* of the enemy, but in his *expulsion* from the field. The destruction becomes the means.

(55) As in the hand-to-hand fight, originally, the destruction of the enemy was the object, so in the combat with fire-arms the primary object is to put the enemy to flight, and the destruction is only the means. We fire upon the enemy to drive him away, and to spare ourselves the close combat for which we are not prepared.

(56) But the danger caused by the combat with firearms is not quite inevitable, it is only more or less probable: its effect, therefore, is not so great on the senses of individuals, and only becomes great through continuance and through its whole sum, which, as it does not affect the senses so much, is not such a direct impression. It is therefore not essentially necessary that one of the two sides should withdraw from it. From this it follows that one party is not put to flight at once, and in many cases may not be at all.

(57) If this is the case then, as a rule at the conclusion of the combat with fire-arms, the close combat must be resorted to in order to put the enemy to flight.

(58) On the other hand, the destructive effect gains in intensity by continuance of the fire combat just as much as it loses in the close combat by the quick decision.

(59) From this it follows that instead of the putting the enemy to flight being the general object of the fire combat, that object is to be looked for in the direct effect of the applied means, that is, in the destruction and weakening of the enemy's forces.

(60) If the object of the close combat is to *drive the enemy from the field,* that of the combat with fire-arms to *destroy his armed force,* then the former is the real instrument for the *decisive stroke,* the latter is to be regarded as *the preparation.*

(61) In each, however, there is a certain amount of the effect pertaining to both principles. The close combat is not devoid of destructive efforts, neither is the combat with fire-arms ineffectual to drive the enemy off the field.

(62) The destructive effect of the close combat is in most cases extremely insignificant, very often it amounts to nil; it would, therefore, hardly be taken account of it it did not sometimes become of considerable importance by increasing the number of prisoners.

(63) But it is well to observe that these cases generally occur after the fire has produced considerable effect.

(64) Close combat in the existing relation of arms would, therefore, have but an insignificant destructive effect without the assistance of fire.

(65) The destructive force of fire-arms in combat may by continuance be intensified to the utmost extremity, that is, to the shaking and extinction of courage.

(66) The consequence of that is, that by far the greatest share in the destruction of the enemy's combatant powers is due to the effect of fire-arms.

(67) The weakening of the enemy through the fire combat either—

(*a*) Causes his retreat, or

(*b*) Serves as a preparation for the hand-to-hand encounter.

(68) By putting the enemy to flight, which is the object of the hand-to-hand combat, the real victory may be attained, because driving the enemy from the field constitutes a victory. If the whole mass engaged is small, then such a victory may embrace the whole, and be a decisive result.

(69) But when the close combat has only taken place between portions of the whole mass of forces, or when several close combats in succession make up the whole combat, then the result in a single one can only be considered as a victory in a *partial combat.*

(70) If the conquered division is a considerable part of the whole, then in its defeat it may carry the whole along with it; and, thus, from the victory over a part, a victory over the whole may immediately follow.

(71) Even if a success in close combat does not amount to a victory over the mass of the enemy's forces, still it always ensures the following advantages

(*a*) Gain of ground.
(*b*) Shaking of moral force.
(*c*) Disorder in the enemy's ranks
(*d*) Destruction of physical force.

(72) In a partial combat, the fire combat is therefore to be regarded as a destroying act, the close combat as a decisive act. How these points are to be reviewed in relation to the total combat we shall consider at a future time.

Relation Of The Two Forms Of Combat In Regard To Attack And Defence

(73) The combat consists, further, of attack and defence.

(74) The attack is the *positive* intention, the defence the *negative.* The first aims at *putting* the enemy *to flight;* the latter merely at *keeping possession.*

(75) But this *keeping possession* is no mere *holding out,* not passive endurance; its success depends on a vigorous reaction. This reaction is the destruction of the attacking forces. Therefore, it is only the *object,* not the *means,* which is to be regarded as *negative.*

(76) But as it follows of itself that if the defender maintains his position the adversary must give way, therefore, although the defender has the negative object, the retreat, that is, the giving way of the enemy, is the sign of victory also for the defender.

(77) Naturally, on account of a like object, the close combat is the element of attack.

(78) But as close combat contains in itself so little of the destructive principle, the assailant who confines himself to the use of it alone would hardly be considered as a combatant in most cases, and in any case would play a very unequal game.

(79) Except when small bodies only are engaged, or bodies consisting entirely of cavalry, the close combat can never constitute the whole attack. The larger the masses engaged, the more artillery and infantry come into play, the less will it suffice for the end.

(80) The attack must, therefore, also include in itself as much of the fire combat as is necessary.

(81) In this, that is, in the fire combat, both sides are to be regarded as upon an equality, so far as respects the mode of fighting. Therefore, the greater the proportion of fighting with fire-arms as compared with close combat, the more the original inequality between attack and defence is diminished. As regards the remaining disadvantages of the close combat, to which the assailant must ultimately have recourse, they must be compensated for by such advantages as are inherent in that form, and by superiority of numbers.

(82) The fire combat is the natural element of the defensive.

(83) When a successful result (the retreat of the assailant) is obtained by that form of combat, there is no necessity to have recourse to close combat.

(84) When that result is not obtained, and the assailant resorts to close combat, the defender must do the same.

(85) Generally, the defence does not by any means exclude the close combat, if the advantages to be expected from it appear greater than those of the combat with fire-arms.

Advantageous Conditions In Both Forms Of Combat

(86) We must now examine more closely the nature in general of both combats, in order to ascertain the points which give the preponderance in the same.

(87) *The fire combat.*

(*a*) Superiority in the use of arms (this depends on the organisation and the quality of the troops).

(*b*) Superiority in the formation (tactical organisation) and the elementary tactics as established dispositions. (See Methodicism, p. 63, vol. i.)

In a question of the employment of regularly disciplined troops in the combat, these things do not come into consideration, because they are supposed to belong to the idea of troops. But, as a subject of the theory of the combat in its *widest sense,* they may and should be considered.

(*c*) The number.

(*d*) The form of the line of battle so far as it is not already contained in *b*.

(*e*) The ground.

(88) As we are only now treating of *the employment of disciplined troops,* we have nothing to do with *a* and *b,* they are only to be taken into consideration as given quantities.

(89*a*) *Superiority of numbers.*

If two unequal bodies of infantry or artillery are drawn up opposite to each other on parallel lines of the same extent, then if every shot fired is directed like a *target shot* against a separate individual, the number of hits will be in proportion to the number of men firing. The proportion of hits would bear just the same relation if the shots were directed against a full target—therefore if the mark was no longer a single man, but a battalion, a line, &c. This is, indeed, also the way in which the *shots* fired by skirmishers in War may for the most part be estimated. But here the target is not full; instead of that it is a line of men with intervals between them. The intervals *decrease* as the number of men increases in a given space; consequently, the effect of a fire combat between bodies of troops of unequal number will be a sum made out of the number of those firing, and the number of the enemy's troops they are firing against; that is, in other words, the superiority in number in a fire combat produces no preponderating effect, because that which is gained through the number of shots is lost again through a greater number of the enemy's taking effect.

Suppose that 50 men place themselves upon the same extent of ground as 500 opposite to them. Let 30 shots out of 50 be supposed to strike the target, that is, the quadrilateral occupied by the enemy's battalion; then, out of the enemy's 500 shots 300 will strike the quadrilateral occupied by our fifty men. But the 500 men stand ten times as close as the 50, therefore our balls hit ten times as many as the enemy's, and thus, by our 50 shots, exactly as many of the enemy are hit as are hit on our side by his 500.*

Although this result does not exactly correspond with the reality, and there is a small advantage in general on the side of the superior numbers, still there is no doubt that it is essentially correct; and that the efficacy on either side, that is, the result in a combat with fire-arms, far from keeping exact pace with the superiority in numbers, is scarcely increased at all by that superiority.

This result is of the utmost importance, for it constitutes the basis of that economy of forces in the preparatory destructive act which may be regarded as one of the surest means to victory.

(89*b*) Let it not be thought that this result may lead to an absurdity; and that, for example, two men (the smallest number who can take up the line of our supposed target) must do just as much execution as 2000, provided that the two men are placed at a distance apart equal to the front of the 2000. If the 2000 always fired directly to their front, that might be the case. But if the number of the weaker side is so small that

the stronger directs his concentrated fire upon individuals, then naturally there must follow a great difference in the effect, for, in such a case, our supposition of simple target-firing is set aside. Likewise, a very weak line of fire would never oblige the enemy to engage in a fire-combat: instead of that, such a line would be driven from the field by him at once. We see, therefore, that the foregoing result is not to be carried to an extreme in application, but yet it is of great importance for the reasons given. Hundreds of times a line of fire has maintained its own against one of twice its strength, and it is easy to see what consequences may result from that in the economy of force.

(89*c*) We may, therefore, say that either of the opposing sides has it in his power to increase or reduce the mutual, that is, the total effect of the fire, according as he brings or does not bring more combatants into the line which is firing.

(90) *The form of the line of battle may be:*

(*a*) With parallel fronts of equal length; then it is the same for both sides.

(*b*) With parallel front, but outflanking the enemy; then it is advantageous (but, as we may easily conceive, the advantage is small, on account of the limited range of fire-arms).

(*c*) Enveloping. This is advantageous on account of the double effect of the shots, and because the greater extent of front follows of itself from that form.

Forms the reverse of *b* and *c* are obviously disadvantageous.

(91) *Ground* is avdantageous in combat with fire-arms—

(*a*) By affording cover like a breastwork.

(*b*) By intercepting the view of the enemy, thus forming an obstacle to his taking aim.

(*c*) As an obstacle to approach, by which the enemy is kept long under our fire, and impeded in the delivery of his own fire.

(92) In close combat the advantages afforded by ground are the same as in fire combat.

(93) The two first subjects (*a* and *b* No. 87) do not come into consideration here. But we must observe that superiority in the use of weapons does not make as great a difference in close combat as in the fire combat; and, on the other hand, courage plays a most decisive part. The subjects touched upon under *b* (No. 87) are especially important for cavalry, the arm by which most close combats are fought.

(94) In close combat *number* is much more decisive than in the combat with fire-arms, it is almost the chief thing.

(95) *The form of the order of battle* is also much more decisive than in the combat with fire-arms, and when the front is parallel, a small instead of a great extent of front is the most advantageous.

(96) *The ground*—

(*a*) As obstacle to approach. In this consists by far its greatest efficacy in close combat.

(*b*) As a means of concealment. This favours a surprise, which is especially important in close combat.

Analysis Of The Combat

(97) In No. 23 we have seen that every combat is a whole, composed of many members or parts, in which the independence of the parts is very unequal, inasmuch as it diminishes by a descending scale. We shall now examine this point more closely.

(98) We can easily imagine as a *single member,* such a number as can be led into the fight by the *word of command;* for instance, a Battalion, a Battery, or a Regiment of cavalry, if these masses are really in close order.

(99) When the Word of Command no longer suffices, a written or verbal Order commences.

(100) The Word of Command admits of no gradations, in point of fact it is a part of the execution. But the Order has degrees, from the utmost distinctness, approaching to the Word of Command, down to the utmost generality. It is not the execution itself, but only a commission to execute.

(101) No one subject to the Word of Command has any will of his own; but, whenever instead of that Word an Order is given, a certain independence of members begins because the Order is of a general nature, and the will of the Leader must supply any insufficiency in its terms.

(102) If a combat admitted of being perfectly prearranged and foreseen in all its coincident and successive parts and events, if, that is to say, its plan could descend into the minutest details, as in the construction of a piece of inanimate machinery, then the Order would have none of this indefiniteness.

(103) But belligerents do not cease to be men, and individuals can never be converted into machines having no will of their own; and the ground on which they fight will seldom or never be a complete and bare level, which can exercise no influence on the combat. It is, therefore, quite impossible to calculate beforehand all that is to take place.

(104) This insufficiency of plan increases with the duration of the combat, and with the number of the combatants. The close combat of a small troop is almost completely

contained in its plan; but the plan for a combat with fire-arms of even very small bodies can never be thoroughly complete to the same degree, on account of its duration and the incidents which spring up. Then again, the close combat of large masses, as, for instance, of a Cavalry Division of 2000 or 3000 horse, cannot be carried out so completely in conformity with the original plan that the will of its single leaders is not frequently obliged to supply something. As for the plan for a great battle, except as regards the preliminary part, it can only be a very general outline.

(105) As this insufficiency of plan (disposition) increases with the time and space which the combat takes, so, therefore, as a rule, a greater margin for contingencies must be allowed to large than to smaller bodies of troops, and the Order will increase in its precision as it descends the scale down to those parts which are governed by Word of Command.

(106) Further, the independence of the parts will also differ according to the circumstances in which they are placed. Space, time, the character of the ground and country, and nature of the duty will diminish or increase this independence as respects one and the same subdivision.

(107) Besides this systematic division of the entire combat into separate parts according to plan, a casual division may also take place thus:

(*a*) By our views expanding beyond the limits of the original plan.

(*b*) By an unforeseen separation of parts, which we intended to have kept under Word of Command.

(108) This fresh division depends on circumstances which cannot be foreseen.

(109) The consequence is unequal result in parts which should have been all united as one whole (because, in point of fact, they become placed in different relations).

(110) Thus arises, at certain parts, the necessity for a change not contemplated in the general plan,

(*a*) That these parts may avoid disadvantages of ground, or of numbers, or of position.

(*b*) That advantages gained in all these different respects may be turned to account.

(111) The consequence of this is that, involuntarily, often more or less designedly, a fire combat passes into close combat, or the other way, the latter into the former.

(112) The problem, then, is to make these changes fit into the general plan, so that—

(*a*) If they lead to a disadvantage, it may be remedied in one way or another.

(*b*) If they lead to a success it may be used as far as possible, short of exposing us to the risk of a reverse.

(113) It is, therefore, the intentional or unintentional division of the total combat into a greater or less number of minor, independent combats, which causes the form of combat to change from close combat to fire combat, as well as from attack to defence, during the total combat.

Now the whole still remains to be considered in this relation.

The Combat Consists Of Two Acts—The Destructive And The Decisive Act

(114) From the fire combat, with its destructive principle, and from the close combat with its principle of putting to flight, according to No. 72, proceed two different acts in the partial combat, the destructive and the decisive act.

(115) The smaller the masses are, the more these two acts will resolve themselves into one simple fire combat, or one close combat.

(116) The greater the masses the more must these two acts be taken in a collective sense, in such manner that the destructive act is made up of a number of simultaneous and successive fire combats; and the decisive act in the same manner, of several close combats.

(117) In this manner the division of the combat not only continues, but also extends itself more and more, the greater the masses brought into conflict; whilst the destructive act and the decisive act are further and further separated from each other in time.

The Destructive Act

(118) The greater the mass of troops, the more important becomes the physical destruction, for—

(*a*) The influence of the Commander is so much the less. (His influence is greater in close combat than in fire combat.)

(*b*) The moral inequality is so much less. With large masses, whole Armies for instance, there is nothing but the difference of nationality; whilst in smaller bodies there is to be added that of corps and of individuals; and, lastly, of special accidental circumstances, which in large bodies *balance* each other.

(*c*) The order of battle is so much the deeper, that is, there are so many more reserves to renew the combat, as we shall see in the sequel. The number of partial combats, therefore, increases, and consequently the duration of the total combat, and by that means the influence of the first moment, which is so very decisive in putting the enemy to flight, is lessened.

(119) From the preceding number it follows that the greater the mass of the Army, the greater must be the physical destruction as a preparation for the decision.

(120) This preparation consists in this, that the number of combatants diminishes on both sides, but the relation alters in our favour.

(121) The first of these is sufficient, if we are already morally or physically superior; the second is requisite, if such is not the case.

(122) The destruction of the enemy's combatant force is made up—

(*a*) Of all that are put physically *hors de combat*—killed, wounded, and prisoners.

(*b*) Of whatever part is spent physically and morally.

(123) After a fire combat of several hours' duration, in which a body of troops has suffered severe loss, for instance, a quarter or one-third of its numbers, the *débris* may, for the time, be looked upon as a heap of burnt-out cinders, for—

(*a*) The men are physically exhausted.

(*b*) They have spent their ammunition.

(*c*) Their arms want cleaning.

(*d*) Many have left the field with the wounded, although not themselves wounded.

(*e*) The rest think they have done their part for the day, and if once they get beyond the sphere of danger do not willingly return to it.

(*f*) The feeling of courage with which they started has had the edge taken off, the longing for the fight is satisfied.

(*g*) The original organisation and formation are partly destroyed, or thrown into disorder.

(124) The consequences, *e* and *f,* make their appearance, more or less, according as the combat has been successful or the reverse. A body of troops which has gained ground, or successfully maintained the original position assigned to it, can be made further use of more easily than one that has been repulsed.

(125*a*) There are two deductions from No. 123 which we must bring under notice.

The first is the *economy of force,* which is made by the use of a smaller number of men in the combat with fire-arms than the enemy employs. For, if the dilapidation of forces in the fire combat consists not only in the loss of those placed *hors de combat,* but further in this, that all who have fought are lowered in their powers; then, naturally, this lowering of powers will be less on that side which brings the fewest troops into action.

If 500 men* have been able to main ain their ground against 1000, if the losses are equal on each side, say 200 men, then on the one side there will remain 800 men who

are fatigued, while the other side will have 800, of whom 300 are fatigued, but 500 are fresh.

(125*b*) The second deduction is that the weakening of the enemy, consequently the *dilapidation of the enemy's combative power,* is of much greater extent than the mere number of killed, wounded, and prisoners would seem to represent. This number amounts to, perhaps, only one-sixth of the whole; there should, therefore, remain five-sixths. But out of that five-sixths, in all probability only the *untouched reserve,* and some troops, which, although they have been in action, have suffered very little, are, in reality, to be regarded as serviceable, and the remainder (perhaps four-sixths) may be looked upon for the present as a *caput mortuum.*

(126) This diminution of the efficient mass is the first aim of the destructive act; the real decision can only be accomplished by smaller masses of troops.

(127) But—although the absolute size of the masses is not an unimportant matter, as fifty men opposed to fifty can proceed to a decision on the spot, while 50,000 opposed to 50,000 cannot do so—still it is the relative, *not the absolute* size of the masses, which is an obstacle to the decision. Thus if five-sixths of the whole have measured their powers in the destructive act, then both Generals, even if they have continued on an equality, will be much nearer to the final resolution which they have to make, and it is only a relatively small impulse which is required to bring on the decisive act. It is all the same whether the sixth part remaining is a sixth of an Army of 30,000, therefore 5000 men, or one-sixth of an Army of 150,000 men, that is, 25,000 men.

(128) The principal object of each side in the destructive act is to work out for itself a preponderance for the decisive act.

(129) This superiority can be obtained by the destruction of the enemy's physical force, but it may also be obtained by the other causes enumerated under No. 4.

(130) There is, therefore, in the destructive act a natural endeavour to profit by all the advantages which offer as far as circumstances will admit.

(131) Now the combat of large masses is always split into several partial combats (No. 23) which are more or less independent, and therefore must frequently contain in themselves both a destructive and a decisive act, if the advantages obtained from the first of these acts are to be turned to account.

(132) Through the skilful and successful mixture of the close combat, we chiefly obtain the advantages which are to be derived from shaking the enemy's courage, creating disorder in his ranks, and gaining ground.

(133) Even the physical destruction of the enemy's forces is very much increased by that means, for prisoners can only be made in close combat.

Thus we may conceive that if an enemy's Battalion is shaken by our fire, if our bayonet attack drives it out of an advantageous position, and we follow him in his flight with a couple of Squadrons, this partial success may place important advantages

of all kinds in the scale of the general result; but then it is a condition that it be done without involving this victorious troop in difficulty, for if our Battalion and our Squadron through this means should fall into the hands of superior forces of the enemy, then this partial decision has been ill-timed.

(134) The utilising of these partial successes is in the hands of the subordinate Commanders, and gives a great advantage to an Army which has experienced officers at the head of its Divisions, Brigades, Regiments, Battalions, Batteries, &c.

(135) Thus each of the two Commanders seeks to obtain for himself in the course of the destructive act those advantages which bring about the decision, and at all events pave the way for it.

(136) The most important of these objects are always captured guns and ground gained.

(137) The importance of the latter is increased if the enemy has made it an object to defend a strong position.

(138) Thus the destructive act on both sides, but especially on that of the assailant, is a cautious advance towards the object.

(139) As numbers are so little decisive in the fire combat (No. 53), therefore the endeavour naturally follows to keep up the combat with as few troops as possible.

(140) As the fire combat predominates in the destructive act, therefore the greatest economy of force must be the prevailing principle in the same.

(141) As numerical force is so essential in close combat, therefore for the decision of partial combats in the destructive act, superior numbers must frequently be employed.

(142) But upon the whole the character of thrift must rule here also, and, in general, only those decisions are to the purpose which realise themselves of themselves as it were, without any great preponderance of numbers.

(143) An inopportune endeavour to gain the decision leads to the following consequences:

(*a*) If it is undertaken with economy of our forces, we get involved with superior forces.

(*b*) If the requisite force is used, we get exhausted before the right time.

(144) The question whether it is opportune to try for a decision recurs very frequently during the destructive act, nevertheless, as respects the great ultimate decision, it presents itself at the end of the destructive act.

(145) The destructive act on this account naturally strives at certain points to pass into the decisive act, because no advantage developed in the course of that act will attain completeness except through the decisive act, which is its necessary complement.

(146) The more fruitful in results the means applied in the destructive act are, or the greater the physical and moral superiority, the stronger will be this tendency of the whole.

(147) But when the results are small or negative, or when the enemy has the superiority, this tendency likewise may be so rare and so feeble at isolated points that, as respects the whole, it is much the same as if it did not exist at all.

(148) This natural tendency may lead to ill-timed decisions in partial combats as well as in the total combat, but it is very far from being an evil on that account; it is rather a necessary property of the destructive act, because without it much would be neglected.

(149) The judgment of the Leader at each point, and of the Commander-in-Chief in the total combat, must determine whether an opportunity which presents itself is advantageous for a decisive blow or not, that is, whether it may not lead to a counter blow, and thus to a *negative* result.

(150) The conduct of a combat in relation to the preparation preceding the decisive stroke, or rather the preparation expressly for that stroke, consists, therefore, in organising a fire combat, and, in a wider sense, a destructive act, and giving to it a proportionate duration, that is, in only proceeding to the decisive stroke when it appears that the destructive act has produced sufficient effect.

(151) The judgment on this point must be guided less by the clock, that is, less by the mere relations of time, than by the events which have taken place, by the evident signs of a superiority having been obtained.

(152) Now as the destructive act, if attended with good results, strives already of itself towards the decisive act, therefore the duty of the Chief consists principally in determining when and where the moment arrives to give the reins to this tendency.

(153) If the tendency towards the decisive act is very weak during the destructive act, that is a tolerably sure sign that victory cannot be calculated on.

(154) In such a case, therefore, the Chief and his Generals will usually not give but receive the decisive shock.

(155) If still it must be given, then it takes place by an express order, which must be accompanied by the use of all the personal means of inspiriting the men, all the stimulating influence which the General has at his command.

The Decisive Act

(156) The decision is that event which produces in one of the Generals a resolution to quit the field.

(157) The grounds for quitting the field we have given in No. 4. These grounds may come forth gradually by one small disaster after another being heaped up in the course of the destructive act, and the resolution may, therefore, be taken without a really decisive event. In such a case no decisive act in particular takes place.

(158) But the resolution may also be produced by one single, very disastrous event, therefore, suddenly, when up to that moment everything has been evenly balanced.

(159) Then that act of the enemy which has called forth this resolution is to be regarded as the decisive act.

(160) The most common case is that the decision ripens gradually in the course of the destructive act, but the resolution of the vanquished gets its final impulse from some particular event. Therefore, in this case also, the decisive act is to be considered as having been given.

(161) If a decisive act is given, then it must be a positive action—

(*a*) It may be an attack; or

(*b*) It may be only the advance of reserves hitherto held under cover

(162) With small bodies, close combat by a single charge is often decisive.

(163) When larger masses are engaged, the attack by means of close combat may also suffice, but a single charge will then hardly be sufficient.

(164) If the masses are still larger, there is then a mixture of the fire combat, as in the case of horse artillery supporting the charge of heavy masses of cavalry.

(165) With great bodies composed of all arms, a decision can never result from close combat alone, a renewed fire combat is necessary.

(166) But this renewed fire combat will be of the nature of an attack itself, it will be carried out in close masses, therefore with an action concentrated in time and space, as a short preparation for the real attack.

(167) When the decision is not the result of a particular close combat, but of a number of simultaneous and consecutive combats of both kinds, it then becomes a distinct act belonging to the entire combat, as has been already said in a general way (No. 115).

(168) In this act the close combat predominates.

(169) In the same measure as the close combat predominates, so will also the offensive, although at certain points the defensive may be preserved.

(170) Towards the close of a battle the line of retreat is always regarded with increased jealousy, therefore a threat against that line is always then a potent means of bringing on the decision.

(171) On that account, when circumstances permit, the plan of the battle will be aimed at that point from the very first.

(172) The more the battle, or combat, develops itself in the sense of a plan of this kind, so much the more seriously the enemy's line of retreat will be menaced.

(173) Another great step towards victory is breaking the order of formation. The regular formation in which the troops commence the action suffers considerably in the long destructive combats, in which they themselves wring out their strength. If this wear and tear and exhaustion has reached a certain point, then a rapid advance in concentrated masses on one side against the line of battle of the other may produce a degree of disorder which forbids the latter any longer to think of victory, and calls in requisition all his powers to place the separate parts of his line in safety, and to restore the connection of the whole in the best way he can for the moment.

(174) From what precedes it is evident that, as in the preparatory acts, the utmost economy of force must predominate, so in the decisive act, to win the mastery through numbers must be the ruling idea.

(175) Just as in the preparatory acts, endurance, firmness, and coolness are the first qualities, so in the decisive act, boldness and fiery spirit must predominate.

(176) Usually only one of the opposing Commanders delivers the deciding stroke, the other receives it.

(177) As long as all continues in equilibrium, he who gives the decisive blow may be—

(*a*) The assailant; or
(*b*) The defender.

(178) As the assailant has the positive object, it is most natural that he should deliver it; and, therefore, this is what occurs most frequently.

(179) But if the equilibrium is much disturbed, then the decision may be given—

(*a*) By the Commander who has the advantage.
(*b*) By the one who is under the disadvantage.

(180) The first is plainly more natural; and if this Commander is also the assailant, it is still more natural: therefore, there are few cases in which the decision does not emanate from him.

(181) But if the defender is the party who has the advantage, then it is also natural that he should give the decision, so that the relative situation which is produced by degrees has more influence than the original intention of offensive and defensive.

(182) When the decision is given by the assailant, although he has palpably the disadvantage, it looks like a last attempt to gain his original object. If the defender, who has gained advantages, gives him time to do so, it is certainly consistent with the nature of the positive intention of the assailant to make such a last attempt.

(183*a*) A defender who, although decidedly at a disadvantage, still proceeds to give the decision, does that which is contrary to the nature of things, and which may be regarded as an act of desperation.

(183*b*) The result in the decisive stage is conformable to the relations just developed; so that, as a rule, it will only be favourable to the side which gives the decision if he is naturally led to do so by the relations in which he stands.

(184) When all is still in a state of equilibrium the result is generally favourable to the side which gives the decision, for at the moment when a battle is ripe for decision, when the forces have worn themselves out on each other, the positive principle is of much greater weight than at the commencement.

(185) The General who receives the decision may either determine on an immediate retreat in consequence, and decline all further combat, or he may continue the combat.

(186) If he continues the engagement he can only do so as—

(*a*) A commencement of his retreat, because he wants time to make the requisite arrangements; or,

(*b*) A virtual struggle through which he still hopes for victory.

(187) If the General who *accepts* the decision stands in very favourable relations, he may in so doing also adhere to the defensive.

(188*a*) But if the decision proceeds naturally from the advantageous situation of the side giving it, then the General who accepts it must also pass over to a more or less active defence, that is, he must oppose attack by attack, partly because the natural advantages of the defence (*position, order, surprise*) wear themselves out by degrees in the course of the combat, and, at last, there is not enough of them left; partly because (as we have said in No. 184) the positive principle acquires incessantly more and more weight.

Their Separation As Regards Time

(188*b*) The view here propounded, that every combat is composed of two separate acts, will meet with strong opposition at first sight.

(189) This opposition will proceed partly from a false view of the combat, which has become habitual, partly from an over-pedantic importance being ascribed to the idea of such a division.

(190) We imagine to ourselves the opposition between attack and defence as too decided, the two activities as too completely antithetical, or, rather, we assume the antithesis to be where it is not to be found in practice.

(191) From this it results that we imagine the assailant, from the first moment to the last, as steadily and unremittingly striving to advance, and every modification in that advance as an entirely involuntary and compulsory one, which proceeds *directly* from the resistance encountered.

(192) According to this idea nothing would be more natural than that every attack should begin with the energy of an assault.

(193) Still even those who adhere to this kind of idea have become accustomed to a preparatory act on the part of the artillery, because it was too plain that without it an assault would generally be useless.

(194) But otherwise that absolute tendency to advance to the attack has been considered so natural that an attack without a shot being fired is looked upon as the ideal of perfection.

Even Frederick the Great, up to the time of the battle of Zorndorf, looked upon fire in the attack as something exceptional.

(195) Although there has since been a disposition to modify that notion, still there are numbers at the present time who think that the assailant *cannot* make himself master of the important points in a position *too soon.*

(196) Those who make the greatest concessions to fire, at the same time advocate an immediate advance to the attack, the delivery of a few volleys by Battalions close to the enemy’s position, and then an onset with the bayonet.

(197) But military history and a glance at the nature of our arms show that absolutely to despise the use of fire in the attack is an absurdity.

(198) A little acquaintance with the nature of the combat and, above all, actual experience, teach us also that a body of troops which has been engaged under fire is seldom fit for a vigorous assault. Therefore, the concession mentioned in No. 196 is worth nothing.

(199) Lastly, military history gives instances without number in which, owing to a premature advance, advantages previously gained have had to be abandoned with serious loss. Therefore, the principle mentioned in No. 195 is also not admissible.

(200) We maintain accordingly, that the idea now alluded to of an unmixed kind of attack, if we may use the expression, is entirely false, because it only answers to a very few extremely exceptional cases.

(201) But if a commencement with close combat and a decision without preparation in a great battle are not consistent with the nature of things, then of itself there arises a distinction between the *preparation by fire* for the decision and the *decision itself,* therefore, between the two acts which we have been discussing.

(202) We have granted that this distinction may fall to the ground in affairs which are quite of a minor nature (as, for instance, between small bodies of cavalry). The question now is whether it does not also come to an end if the masses attain to certain proportions; not as to whether the employment of fire might cease, for that would be a contradiction in itself, but whether the sharp distinction between the two activities ceases, so that they can no longer be considered as two separate acts.

(203) It may perhaps be maintained that a Battalion should fire before it charges with the bayonet; the one must precede the other, and thus two different acts take place, but only as regards the Battalion, not as respects the greater subdivision of the Brigade, &c. These have no fire period and decision period; they seek to come in contact with the object pointed out to them as speedily as possible, and must leave the way in which it is to be done to the Battalions.

(204) Do we not perceive that in this way all unity would be lost? As one Battalion fights quite close to another, the successes and reverses of one must have a necessary influence on others, and as the effect of our musketry fire is so small that it requires considerable duration to make it efficacious, the influence just noticed must be greater and more decisive through that duration. Even on this ground alone there must be, for the Brigade as well as for the Battalion, a certain general division of time as respects the destructive and the decisive combats.

(205) But another more substantial reason is, that for the decision we are glad to use fresh troops, at least troops that have not been engaged in the destructive act; but these must be taken from the reserve, and the reserves, by their nature, are common property, and on that account cannot be divided beforehand amongst the Battalions.

(206) Now, as the necessity of a division in the combat passes on from the Battalion to the Brigade, therefore from that it passes on to the Division, and from the Division to still larger bodies.

(207) But as the parts of a whole (divisions of the first order) always become more independent the larger the whole is, therefore it is true the unity of the whole will also press less stringently on them, and thus it happens that in the course of a partial combat more decisive acts may and will always take place according as the whole is greater.

(208) The decisions, when Corps are large, will therefore not unite themselves into a whole to the same degree as in the case of Corps of smaller size, but will distribute

themselves more as regards time and space; still, between the beginning and the end, a notable distinction between the two different acts is always observable.

(209) Now the parts may be so large, and their separation from each other so wide, that although their action in the combat is certainly still directed by the will of one General (a necessary condition to constitute an independent combat), yet this direction limits itself to instructions at the commencement, or at most to a few orders in the course of the combat; in this case, such a part has in itself almost complete power to organise its whole combat.

(210) The more important the decisions which rest with a Corps by its situation, so much the more they will influence the decision of the whole; indeed, we may even suppose the relation of some parts to be such that in their decisions that of the whole is at once contained, and, therefore, a separate decisive act for the whole is no longer required.

(211) *Example.*—In a great battle, in which the parts of the Army of the first rank are Corps, a Brigade may receive the order at the commencement to take a village. For this purpose it will make use for itself of its destructive act and its decisive act. Now, the taking of this village may have, more or less, an influence on the ultimate decision of the whole; but it is not in the nature of things that it should greatly influence, and much less that it should effect, that decision of itself, because a Brigade is too small a body to give a decision at the commencement of a battle; but we may very well conceive that the effectual taking of this village forms, nevertheless, part of the destructive measure by which the enemy's force is to be shattered and reduced.

On the other hand, if we suppose an order given to a considerable Corps, perhaps a third or a half of the whole force, to take a certain important part of the enemy's position, then the result expected through this Corps may easily be so important as to be decisive for the whole; and if this Corps attains its object, no further decisive act may then be necessary. Now it is easy to conceive further that, owing to distance and the nature of the country, very few orders can be transmitted to this Corps in the course of the battle, consequently that both preparatory and decisive measures must be left to its discretion. In this manner one common decisive act falls to the ground altogether, and it is divided into separate decisive acts of some of the great parts.

(212) This, indeed, frequently takes place in great battles, and a pedantic notion of the *severance of the two acts* of which we conceive the battle to consist would therefore be in contradiction with the course of such a battle.

(213) Although we set up this distinction in the working of a battle as a point of great importance, it is far from *our intention* to place importance on the *regular severance and division* of these two activities, and to insist upon that as a practical principle; we only wish to separate in idea two things which are essentially different, and to show how this inherent difference governs of itself *the form of the combat.*

(214) The difference in the form shows itself most plainly in small combats, where the simple fire and close combat form a complete contrast to each other. The contrast

is less decided when the parts are larger, because then in the two acts the two forms of combat from which they proceed unite themselves again; but the acts themselves are greater, take more time, and consequently are further separated from each other in time.

(215) There may be no separation also as regards the whole in so far that the decision has been already handed over to separate Corps of the first order; but still even then a trace of it will be found in the whole, as it must be our endeavour to bring the decisions of these different Corps into concert in relation to time, whether it be that we consider it necessary that the decisions should take place simultaneously, or that the decisions should take place in a certain order of succession.

(216) The difference between these two acts will, therefore, never be completely lost, as respects the whole, and that which is lost for the whole will reappear in the elements of the first order.

(217) This is the way in which our view is to be understood, and if thus understood, then, on the one hand, it will not come short of the reality, and on the other, it will direct the attention of the leader of a combat (let it be great or small, partial or general) to giving each of the two acts of activity its due share, that there may be neither precipitation nor negligence.

(218) *Precipitation* there will be if sufficient space and time are not allowed to the destructive act, if things are broken across the knee;* an unfortunate issue of the decision results, which either cannot be repaired at all, or at all events remains a substantial disadvantage.

(219) *Negligence* in general there will be if a complete decision does not take place, either from want of courage or from a wrong view of the situation; the result of this is always waste of force, but it may further be a positive disadvantage, because the maturity of the decision does not quite depend upon the duration of the destructive act, but on other circumstances as well, that is to say, on a favourable opportunity.

Plan Of Battle—Definition

(220*a*) The plan of the battle makes its unity possible; every action in common requires such unity. This unity is nothing else but the object of the combat; from it proceed the directions which require to be given to all the different parts, in order to attain the object in the best way. The appointment of the object, and the arrangements consequent upon it, form therefore the plan.

(220*b*) We mean here, by plan, everything which is prescribed respecting the battle, whether beforehand, at the commencement, or in the course of the engagement; consequently, the whole operation of intelligence on matter.

(220*c*) But there is plainly an essential difference between such directions on the one hand, as must be and can be given previously, and those, on the other hand, which the exigencies of the moment require.

(220*d*) The first constitutes the *Plan* in the proper sense, the latter we may call the *Conduct* (of the battle).

(221) As these determinations which the moment calls forth are chiefly derived from the reciprocal action of the opposing parties, we shall leave the discussion and analysis of this difference until we come to the subject of the "reciprocal action."

(222) A part of the plan lies ready made in the formation (tactical organisation) of the combatant forces, by which the great number of parts is reduced to a few.

(223) In a partial combat this formation is a thing of more consequence than in the total combat; in the former it often constitutes the whole plan, and the smaller the body, the more this will be the case. A Battalion in a great battle does not use many other dispositions than those prescribed by the regulations and on the drill ground; but that is not sufficient for a Division, there particular directions become more necessary.

(224) But in the total combat the formation is seldom the whole plan, even for the smallest body: the plan often modifies the formation to afford scope for special dispositions. A Squadron undertaking the surprise of one of the enemy's small posts divides itself into several separate parts just as well as the largest Army.

Aim Of The Plan

(225) The object of the combat makes the unity of the plan; we may regard it as its aim, that is, the direction to which all activities should converge.

(226) The object of a combat is victory; in other words, everything which is a condition of victory, and which is included in No. 4.

(227) None of the objects enumerated in No. 4 can be attained in battle, except by the destruction of the enemy's force, which, therefore, appears to be the means for all.

(228) It is itself in most cases the principal object as well.

(229) If that is the case the plan is aimed at the greatest possible destruction of the enemy's forces.

(230) When some of the other things named in No. 1 are of greater importance than the destruction of the enemy's force, it takes a subordinate place as a means; then the greatest possible is no longer demanded, but only a sufficient destruction, and we may then take the nearest way to the aim.

(231*a*) There are cases in which the points named in No. 4, *c, d, e, f, g,* which lead to the retreat of the enemy, may be attained without any destruction of the enemy's armed forces; then the enemy is conquered by a manœuvre and not by a combat. But this is no victory, therefore only for use when we have something else than a victory for an object.

(231*b*) In such cases, the employment of military force will still always imply the idea certainly of a combat, therefore of a destruction of the enemy's force, but only as *possible* not as *probable.* For inasmuch as our views are aimed at something else than the destruction of the enemy's forces, we pre-suppose these other things to be effectual, and that they will prevent any serious opposition from taking place. If we cannot make such a pre-supposition, then we ought not to choose these other things for our end, and if we err in the pre-supposition, the plan will miss its aim.

(232) From the preceding number it follows that whenever a considerable destruction of the enemy's forces is the condition of victory, it must also be the chief object of the plan.

(233) Now, as a manœuvre is not in itself a combat, but a combat takes place if a manœuvre does not succeed, therefore neither can the rules which apply to total combat suit the case of a manœuvre; and the particular things which are efficacious in a manœuvre can contribute nothing to the theory of the combat.

(234) Many mixed relations certainly arise in practice, but that is no reason against separating things in theory which in themselves are essentially different; if we know the nature of each part, then the combination of them may easily be made.

(235) The destruction of the enemy's armed force is, therefore, in all cases the aim, and the things named in No. 4, *b, c, d, e, f,* are first called forth by it, but then certainly enter into reciprocal action with it as powers in themselves.

(236) Such of these things as perpetually recur—that is to say, are not the consequence of special relations—ought also properly to be regarded as effects of the destruction of the enemy's forces.

(237) So far, therefore, as it is possible to establish anything quite general as to the plan of a battle, it can only relate to the most effectual application of our own forces to the destruction of the enemy's.

Relation Between The Magnitude And Certainty Of The Result

(238) In War, and therefore, of course, in combat, we have to deal with moral forces and effects which cannot be nicely calculated; there must, consequently, always remain a great uncertainty as to the result of the means applied.

(239) This is still further increased by the number of contingencies with which operations in War are brought into contact.

(240) Wherever there is uncertainty, risk becomes an essential element.

(241) To *risk,* in the ordinary acceptation, means to build upon things which are more improbable than probable. *To risk,* in the widest sense, is to suppose things which are not certain. We shall take it here in the latter sense.

(242) Now, if there was in all cases a clearly defined line between probability and improbability, the idea might occur to us to make it the boundary-line of risk, and hold the passing of that line as inadmissible, that is, as risk in the restricted sense of the word.

(243) But, in the first place, such a line is a chimera; and, in the next, the combat is not an act of reflection only, but of passion and courage as well. These things cannot be shut out: if we should try to confine them too closely, we should divest our own powers of the most powerful springs of action in War, and involve ourselves in constant disadvantage; for in most cases the falling short of the (true) line, which is so unavoidable and frequent, is only compensated by our sometimes over-stepping it.

(244) The more favourable our pre-suppositions—that is to say, the greater the risk we run—so much the greater are the results which we expect by these same means, and therefore the objects which we have in view.

(245) The more we risk the less the probability and, consequently, the certainty of the result.

(246) The greatness of the result and the certainty of it stand, therefore, in opposition to each other when the means given are the same.

(247) The first question now is, how much value we should put upon one or other of these two opposite principles.

(248) Upon this nothing general can be laid down; on the contrary, of all questions in War it is the one most dependent on the particular circumstances in each case. In the first place, it is determined by relations which, in many cases, oblige us to run the greatest risks. Secondly, the spirit of enterprise and courage are things purely subjective, which cannot be prescribed. We can require of a Commander that he should judge of his means and relations with professional knowledge, and not overestimate their effects; if he does this, then we must trust to him to turn his means to the best advantage with the aid of his courage.

Relation Between The Magnitude Of The Result And The Price

(249) The second question in relation to the destruction of the enemy's forces concerns the price to be paid for it.

(250) With the intention of destroying the enemy's forces is certainly in general included the idea of destroying more than we shall in turn sacrifice on our own part; but this is by no means a necessary condition, for there may be cases (for instance, when we have a great superiority in numbers) when the mere diminution of the enemy's forces is an advantage, even if we pay for it by greater loss on our own side.

(251) But even if we aim decidedly at destroying more of the enemy's force than we sacrifice on our own side, still there always remains the question how great is that sacrifice to be, for according to it the chance of the result naturally rises and falls.

(252) We readily perceive that the answer to this question depends on the value which we place on our forces, therefore on individual interests. To these interests the decision must be left; and we can neither say that it is a rule to spare our own troops as much as possible, or to make a lavish use of them.

Determination Of The Nature Of Combat For The Separate Parts (Corps, &C.)

(253) The plan of the battle fixes for each single Division where, when, and how it is to fight—that is, it fixes *time, place,* and *form* of the combat.

(254) Here, as well as everywhere, the general relations, that is, those proceeding from the abstract idea, are to be distinguished from those which the particular case brings with it.

(255) The manifold diversity in plans of battles must naturally proceed from the special relations in each case, because when the special advantages and disadvantages are sought for and discovered, the former are brought into use, and the latter are neutralised.

(256) But the general relations also give certain results, and although few in number and simple in form, still they are very important, because they belong to the very essence of the thing, and constitute the basis in all other decisions.

Attack And Defence

(257) In regard to the nature of the combat there are only two distinctions, which always appear and are therefore general; the first arises from the positive or negative intention, and is the distinction between attack or defence; the other arises from the nature of arms, and is the distinction between the fire combat and the close combat.

(258) In the strictest sense, defence should only be the warding off a blow, and should therefore require no other weapon than a shield.

(259) But that would be a pure negation, a state absolutely passive; and making War is anything but patient endurance; the idea of thorough passivity can therefore never be laid at the root of defence.

(260) Strictly considered, fire-arms, the most passive of weapons, have still something positive and active in their nature. Now the defence makes use, in general, of the same weapons, and also of the same forms of combat as the attack, both in fire and close combat.

(261) The defence is therefore to be considered a contest just as much as the attack.

(262) The object of this contest can be nothing but victory; which is, therefore, just as much an object for the defence as for the attack.

(263) There is nothing to justify the conception of the defender's victory being something negative; if somewhat like it, in certain cases, that lies in particular conditions: into the *conception* of the defence that notion *must* not enter, otherwise it reacts logically on the whole idea of combat, and introduces into it contradictions, or leads back again, by strict deduction, to that absurdity, a state of absolute endurance and sufferance.

(264) And yet there is a difference between attack and defence which, while it is the only one in principle, is also a very essential one; it is, that *the assailant wills the action* (*the combat*), *and calls it into life; whilst the defender waits for it.*

(265) This principle runs through all War, therefore through the whole province of combat, and in it all differences between attack and defence have their origin.

(266) But whoever wills an action must aim at something thereby, and this object must be something *positive,* because the intention *that nothing should be done* could call forth no action. The offensive must, therefore, have a *positive* object.

(267) Victory cannot be this object, for it is only a means. Even in a case where victory is sought entirely on account of itself, on account of the mere honour of arms, or to influence political negotiations by its moral weight, still, that effect, and not the victory itself, is always the object.

(268) The defender, just as well as the aggressor, must have victory in view, but in each the desire springs from a different source; in the offensive from the object which the victory is to serve; in the defender, from the mere fact of the combat. The one looks down upon it, as it were, from a higher standpoint; the other looks up to it from a lower position. Whoever fights can only fight for the victory.

(269) Now, why does the defender fight, that is, why does he accept the combat? Because he will not concede the positive object of the offensive; or, in other words, because he wants to maintain the *status quo.* This is the primary and necessary object of the defender; whatever further may attach itself to this is not necessary.

(270) The necessary intention of the defender, or rather the necessary part of the defender's intention, is therefore *negative.*

(271*a*) Wherever there is this negativity on the part of the defender, that is, wherever and whenever it is his interest that nothing should be done, but that things should remain as they are, he is thereby enjoined not to act, but to wait until his opponent acts; but the moment that the latter acts, the defender can no longer attain his object by waiting and not acting; he, therefore, now acts just as well as his opponent, and the difference ceases.

(271*b*) If we apply this, in the first place, to the whole combat only, then all difference between attack and defence will consist in this, that the one waits for the other; but the course of the actual combat will not be further influenced by it.

(272) But this principle of the defence may also be applied to partial combats: it may be for the interest of Corps, or parts of an Army, that no change should take place, and in that way they may also be led to adopt an attitude of expectation.

(273) This is not only possible as regards branches and Corps on the side of the defender, but also as respects those on the side of the assailant; it takes place in reality on both sides.

(274) It is natural, however, that it should occur more frequently in the case of the defender than in that of the assailant, but this can only be shown when the particular circumstances in connection with the defensive principle come under consideration.

(275) The more we imagine the defensive principle descending to the smallest branches in a total combat, and the more generally it is diffused throughout all the branches, so much the more passive becomes the whole resistance, so much the more the defence approaches to that point of absolute endurance which we look upon as an absurdity.

(276) The point in this direction at which the advantage to the defender of waiting ceases, that is, the point where its efficacy is exhausted, where, to a certain extent it is satiated, we shall only be able to examine closely hereafter.

(277) For the present, all that we deduce from what has been said is that the offensive or defensive intention not only determines something as to the commencement of the combat, but may also pervade its whole course—that by that means there are therefore in reality two different kinds of combat.

(278) The plan of the combat must therefore determine in every case whether as a whole it is to be an offensive or defensive combat.

(279) It must also determine this point for those Corps which have assigned to them a mission different from that of the general body.

(280) If we now leave out of consideration for the present every particular circumstance which might decide the choice of attack and defence, then there is only one rule which presents itself, namely, that *when we wish to defer the solution we must act defensively; when we seek it, offensively.*

(281) We shall see this principle come into connection presently with another which will make it plainer.

Fire Combat And Close Combat

(282) The plan of the combat must further determine the choice of the form of combat in its relation to arms—that is, fire combat and close combat.

(283) But these two forms are not so much branches of the combat as essential elements of it. They result from the armament, they belong to each other, and only by the combination of the two together can the full power of the combat be developed.

(284) The truth of this view (which otherwise is not absolute but only approximative, comprehending the majority of cases), shows itself by the combination of arms in the hands of one combatant, and by the intimate union of different kinds of troops which has become a necessity.

(285) But a separation of these two elements and the use of the one without the other is not only possible, but very frequently happens.

(286) In respect to the mutual relations of the two, and their natural order amongst themselves, the plan of the battle has nothing to determine, as these are determined already by conception, by the formation (tactical organisation), and the drill-ground, and therefore, like the formation, belong to the stereotypic part of the plan.

(287) As to the use of these two forms of combat apart from each other, there is no general rule, unless this can pass for such, that such separation must always be regarded as a necessary evil, that is, as a less effective form of action. All cases in which we are obliged to make use of this weaker form belong to the domain of particular circumstances. Occasions for the use of the bayonet alone, such, for instance, as the execution of a surprise, or when there is no time to use fire-arms, or if we are sure of a great superiority of courage on our side are plainly only isolated cases.

Determination Of Time And Place

(288) As to the determination of time and place, we have, in the first place, to observe in reference to these two things, that in the total combat the determination of place belongs to the defence alone, the determination of time to the attack.

(289) But for partial combats, the plan either of an offensive or of a defensive combat has to give determinations respecting both.

Time

(290) The appointment of time for a partial combat, which seems at first sight only to affect the subject at most in a few points, takes, however, a different turn on closer examination, and is seen to penetrate it through and through with a ruling idea, decisive in the highest degree, that is, the possibility of a successive use of forces.

Successive Use Of Forces

(291) Simultaneous action is, in itself, a fundamental condition of the common action of separate forces. This is also the case in War, and particularly in the combat. For as the number of the combatants is a factor in the product of the same, therefore, *ceteris paribus,* the simultaneous application of all our forces, that is, the greatest assemblage of them in time against an enemy who does not employ all his at once, will give the victory, certainly in the first instance only, over that part of the enemy's force which has been employed; but as this victory over a part of the enemy's forces raises the moral force of the conqueror, and lowers that of the vanquished, it follows, therefore, that although the loss of physical force may be equal on both sides, still this *partial victory* has the effect of raising the total forces of the conqueror and diminishing those of the vanquished, and that consequently it may determine the result of the total combat.

(292) But the deduction drawn in the preceding number supposes two conditions which do not exist; in the first place, that the number (of troops) must have no maximum; and, secondly, that the use of one and the same force has no limits as long as there is anything left of it.

(293) As regards the first of these points, the number of combatants is limited at once by space, for all that cannot be brought into actual use are superfluous. By it the depth and extent of the formation of all combatants intended to act simultaneously is limited, and consequently the number of combatants.

(294) But a much more important limitation of numbers lies in the nature of the fire combat. We have seen (No. 89*c*) that in it, within certain limits, the increase of number has only the effect of raising the strength of the fire combat on both sides; that is, its total effects. Now this increased effect, when it brings no advantage in itself for one side, ceases then to be of service to that side; it therefore easily reaches a maximum in that case.

(295) This maximum determines itself entirely by the individual case, by the ground, the moral relations between the opposing troops, and the more immediate object of the fire combat. Here it is enough to say that there is such a thing.

(296) The number of troops to be employed simultaneously has, therefore, a maximum, beyond which a waste takes place.

(297) In the same way the use of one and the same body of troops has its limits. We have seen (in No. 123) how troops under fire gradually become unserviceable; but there is likewise a deterioration in close combat. The exhaustion of physical force is less there than in fire combat, but the moral effect produced by an unsuccessful issue is infinitely greater.

(298) Through this deterioration, which forces used in action suffer, including as well those not actually engaged, a new principle comes into the combat, which is the inherent superiority of fresh troops opposed to those already used.

(299) There is still a second subject for consideration, which consists in a temporary deterioration of forces that have been engaged in the crisis which occurs in every action.

(300) The close combat in practice may be said to have no duration. In the moment that the shock takes place between two cavalry regiments the thing is decided, and the few seconds of actual sword-fight are of no consequence as regards time: it is very much the same with infantry and with large masses. But the affair is not then finished on that account; the state of crisis which has burst out with the decision is not yet quite over; the victorious Regiment pursuing the vanquished at full speed is not the same Regiment lately drawn up on the field of battle in perfect order; its moral force is certainly intensified, but, as a rule, its physical force, as well as that resulting from military order in its ranks, has suffered. It is only by the loss which his adversary has suffered in moral strength, and by the circumstance that he is just as much disordered, that the conqueror retains his superiority, therefore, if a new adversary makes his appearance with his moral force intact, and his ranks in perfect order, there can be no question that, supposing the troops equally good, he will beat the conqueror.

(301) A similar crisis also takes place in the fire combat, to such a degree that the side which has just been victorious by its fire, and has driven back its enemy, still finds itself, for the moment, in a decidedly weakened condition as respects order in its ranks, and physical and moral force, a condition which lasts until all that has been thrown into disorder is once more restored to its normal relations.

(302) What we have said here of smaller units holds good with respect to larger ones as well.

(303) The crisis is in itself greater in smaller units, because it has an effect uniformly throughout the whole, but it is of shorter duration.

(304) The weakest is a general crisis, especially of a whole Army; but it lasts the longest in large Armies, often for several hours.

(305) As long as the conqueror is in the crisis of the combat, the conquered has in that crisis a means of still restoring the combat, that is, of turning its result, if he can bring forward fresh troops in sufficient numbers.

(306) In this manner, therefore, the successive employment of troops is introduced in a second way, as an efficacious principle.

(307) But if the successive employment of troops in a series of combats following one after another is possible; and if the simultaneous use is not unlimited, then it follows of itself that the forces, which cannot be efficacious in simultaneous action, may become so in successive efforts.

(308) By this series of partial combats, *one after another,* the duration of the whole combat is considerably extended.

(309) This duration now brings into view a fresh motive for the successive use of forces, by introducing a new quantity into the calculation, which is *the unforeseen event.*

(310) If, in general, a successive use of troops is possible, then it follows that we can no longer know how the enemy will employ his; for only that portion which is brought into action at once comes within the scope of our observation, the rest does not, and therefore we can only form some general conjectures respecting it.

(311) By the mere duration of the action there is brought into our reckoning an increased amount of pure chance, and that element naturally plays a more important part in War than anywhere else.

(312) Unforeseen events require a general system of precaution, and this can consist in nothing else than placing in rear a proportionate force, which is the reserve, properly speaking.*

Depth Of The Order Of Battle

(313) All battles which are to be fought by bodies of troops in succession require from their very nature that fresh troops should be forthcoming. These may either be quite fresh, that is, troops which have not been engaged at all, or such as have been in action, but by rest have recovered more or less from their exhaustion. It is easy to see that this gives room for many shades of difference.

(314) Both the use of quite fresh troops as well as the use of such as have refreshed themselves supposes that they have been in rear—that is, in a position beyond the region of destruction.

(315) This also has its degrees, for the region of destruction does not end at once, but decreases gradually until at last it ends entirely.

(316) The range of small arms and of grape are well-defined gradations.

(317) The further a body of troops is posted in rear, the fresher they will be when brought into action.

(318) But no body of troops which has been within reach of an effective fire of small arms, or of case, can be considered fresh.

(319) We have, therefore, three reasons for keeping a certain number of troops in rear.

They serve (*a*) to relieve or reinforce exhausted troops, especially in fire combat.

(*b*) To profit by the crisis in which the conqueror is placed directly after his success.

(*c*) As a provision against unforeseen events.

(320) All troops kept back come under these categories whatever arm they belong to, whether we call them a second line or reserve, whether they are part of a Division, or of the whole.

Polarity Of The Simultaneous And Successive Use Of Troops

(321) As the simultaneous and the successive use of troops are opposed to one another, and each has its advantages, they may be regarded as two poles, each of which attracts the resolution to itself, and by that means fixes it at a point where they are in a state of equilibrium, provided that this resolution is founded on a right estimate of the opposing forces.

(322) Now, we require to know the laws of this polarity—that is, the advantages and conditions of these two applications of force, and thereby also their relations with one another.

(323) The simultaneous employment of forces may be intensified—

- a. With equal fronts—both
  - (*a*) In fire combat.
  - (*b*) In close combat.
- b. With a greater front, that is, enveloping.

(324) Only those forces which are brought into efficient activity at the same time can be regarded as applied simultaneously. When the fronts are equal, such application is therefore limited by the possibility of acting effectively. For instance, in fire combat, three ranks might perhaps fire at the same time, but six cannot.

(325) We have shown (in No. 89) that two lines of fire of *unequal* strength as regards numbers may be a match for each other, and that a diminution (of numbers) on one side, if it does not exceed certain limits, has only the result of *reducing the mutual effect.*

(326) But the more the destructive effect of the fire combat is diminished, the more time is required to produce the necessary effect. Therefore, that side which desires chiefly to gain time (commonly the defensive side) is interested in modifying, as much as possible, the total destructive effect of the fire (that is, the sum of the mutual fire).

(327) Further, this must also be an object with the side which is much the weaker in point of numbers, because, when the losses are equal, his are always relatively greatest.

(328) When the conditions are reversed, the interests will be reversed also.

(329) When no special interest for hastening the action predominates, it will be the interest of both sides to do with as few troops as possible, that is, as already said (No.

89*b*), only to employ so many that the enemy will not be induced to come to close quarters at once, owing to the smallness of our numbers.

(330) In this manner, therefore, the simultaneous employment of forces in fire combat is limited by the *want of any advantage,* and both sides have to fall back upon the successive use of the spare forces.

(331) In close combat the superiority in numbers is above all things decisive, and the *simultaneous* employment of troops is on that account so much to be preferred to the *successive,* that the latter in mere theory is almost completely excluded, and only becomes possible through accessory circumstances.

(332) Close combat is in fact a decision, and one which lasts hardly any time; this excludes the successive use of forces.

(333) But we have already said that the crisis of the close combat affords favourable scope for the successive use of forces.

(334) Further, the decisions in partial close combats belonging to a greater whole are not absolute decisions; therefore the application of our force to the further combats which are possible must also be taken into consideration.

(335) This leads then also to not using at one time more troops in close combat than appear to be just necessary to make certain of the result.

(336) As regards this point there is no other general rule, except that circumstances which obstruct execution (such as a very courageous enemy, difficult ground, &c.) occasion a necessity for a greater number of troops.

(337) But for the general theory, it is of consequence to observe that the employment of more troops than is necessary in close combat is never so disadvantageous as in fire combat, because in the first, the troops only become unserviceable at the time of the crisis, not for a continuance.

(338) The simultaneous employment of forces in the close combat is therefore subject to this rule, that it must in all cases be sufficient to produce the result, and that the successive use can in no way make up for insufficiency, for the results cannot be added together as in fire combat; and further, that when once the point of sufficiency is reached, any greater simultaneous application of force becomes a waste of power.

(339) Now that we have considered the application of large bodies of troops in fire and close combat, by increasing the depth of the same, we come to that which is possible by *extending the front,* that is, in the enveloping form.

(340) There are two ways in which we may conceive a greater number of combatants brought simultaneously into action through a greater width of front, viz.:

(*a*) By extending our front so as to cause the enemy to extend his also. This does not give us any superiority over the enemy, but it has the effect of bringing more forces into play on both sides.

(*b*) By outflanking the enemy's front.

(341) To bring more forces into action on both sides can in very few cases be of any advantage to one of the two sides, it is also uncertain whether the enemy will respond to this further extension of front.

(342) If he does not respond, then a part of our front, that is of our forces, will be either unemployed, or we must apply the overlapping part of our front to *turn* the enemy.

(343) It is then only the apprehension of this turning which moves the enemy to extend as far as we have done.

(344) If, however, the enemy is to be turned, it is plainly better to make arrangements for that purpose from the first, and therefore we should consider an extension of front only from that point of view.

(345) Now, in the employment of troops, the enveloping form has this peculiar property, that it not only increases the number of troops simultaneously engaged on the two sides, but it also allows us (the party using it) to bring more of them into activity than the enemy can.

(346) If, for instance, a Battalion with a front 180 paces in length is surrounded, and has to show front on four sides, and if the enemy is at a distance of musketry range, (150 yards) from it, then there would be room for eight Battalions to act with effect against that single Battalion.*

(347) The enveloping form therefore comes in here on account of this peculiarity; but we must at the same time bring under consideration its other specialities also, that is, its advantages and disadvantages.

(348) A second advantage of the enveloping form is the increased effect resulting from the concentration of fire.

(349) A third advantage is its effect in the interception of the enemy's retreat.

(350) These three advantages of enveloping diminish according as the forces, or rather their fronts, become greater, and they increase the smaller the fronts are.

(351) For as regards the first (No. 345), the range of arms remains the same, whether the masses of troops be great or small (it being understood that they consist of the same arms of the service), the actual difference, therefore, between the enveloping line and the line enveloped is a quantity which always remains the same; and, consequently, its relative value is always diminishing in proportion as the front is extended.

(352) To surround a Battalion, at 150 yards, eight Battalions are required (No. 346); but ten Battalions, on the other hand, might be surrounded by only twenty Battalions.

(353) The enveloping form, however, is seldom, if ever, carried out *completely,* that is to say, to the complete circle, rarely more than partially, and usually within 180°. Now, if we imagine to ourselves a body of the size of a considerable Army, we see plainly how little will remain of the first of the above advantages under such circumstances.

(354) It is just the same with the second advantage, as may be seen at a glance.

(355) The third advantage, also, of course, notably diminishes by the greater extension of the front; although, here, some other relations also come into consideration.

(356) But the enveloping form has also a peculiar disadvantage, which is, that the troops being, by that form, spread out over a greater space, their efficient action is diminished in two respects.

(357) For instance, the time which is required to go over a certain space cannot, at the same time, be utilised for fighting. Now, all movements which do not lead perpendicularly on the enemy's line have to be made over a greater space by the enveloping party than by the party enveloped, because the latter moves more or less on the radii of the smaller circle, the former on the circumference of the greater, which makes an important difference.

(358) This gives the side enveloped the advantage of a greater facility in the use of his forces at *different* points.

(359) But the unity of the whole is also lessened by the greater space covered, because intelligence and orders must pass over greater distances.

(360) Both these disadvantages of enveloping increase with the increase in the width of front. When there are only a few Battalions they are insignificant; with large Armies, on the other hand, they become important—for

(361) The difference between radius and circumference is constant; therefore, the absolute difference becomes always greater, the greater the front becomes; and it is with absolute differences we are now concerned.

(362) Besides, with quite small bodies of troops few or no flank movements occur, whilst they become more frequent as the size of the masses increases.

(363) Lastly, as regards interchange of communications, there is no difference as long as the whole space is only such as can be overlooked.

(364) Therefore, if the advantages of the enveloping form are very great and the disadvantages very small when the fronts are short; if the advantages diminish and the

disadvantages increase with the extension of front, it follows that there must be a point where there is an equilibrium.*

(365) Beyond that point, therefore, the extension of front can no longer offer any advantages over the successive use of troops; but, on the contrary, disadvantages arise.

(366) The equilibrium between the advantages of the successive use of forces, and those of a greater extent of front (No. 341) must, therefore, be on this side of that point.

(367) In order to find out this point of equilibrium, we must bring the advantages of the enveloping form more distinctly into view. The simplest way to do so is as follows:

(368) A certain front is necessary in order to exempt ourselves from the effect of the first of the two disadvantages of being surrounded.

(369) As respects the convergent (double) effect of fire, there is a length of front where that completely ceases, namely, if the distance between the portions of the line bent back, in case we are surrounded by the enemy, exceeds that of the range of fire-arms.

(370) But, in rear of every position, a space out of reach of fire is required for the reserves, for those who command, &c., whose place is in rear of the front. If these were exposed to fire from three sides, then they could no longer fulfil the objects for which they are intended.

(371) As these details of themselves form considerable masses in large Armies, and, consequently, require more room, therefore, the greater the whole, the greater must be the space out of the reach of fire in rear of the front. Accordingly, on this ground, the front must increase as the masses increase.

(372) But the space (out of fire) behind a considerable mass of troops must be greater, not only because the reserves, &c., occupy more space, but, besides that also, in order to afford greater security; for, in the first place, the effect of stray shots would be more serious amongst large masses of troops and military trains than amongst a few Battalions; secondly, the combats of large masses last much longer, and, through that, the losses are much greater amongst the troops behind the front who are not actually engaged in the combat.

(373) If, therefore, a certain length is fixed for the necessary extent of front, then it must increase with the size of the masses.

(374) The other advantage of the enveloping form (the superiority in the number acting simultaneously) leads to no determinate quantity for the front of a line; we must therefore confine ourselves to saying that it diminishes with the extension of front.

(375) Further, we must point out that the simultaneous action of superior numbers here spoken of chiefly relates to *musketry fire;* for as long as artillery alone is in action, space will never be wanting, even for the enveloped on his smaller curve to plant as many pieces as the enemy can on the greater curve; because there never is enough artillery with an Army to cover the whole front of a continuous line.*

(376) It cannot be objected that the enemy has still always an advantage in the greater space, because his guns need not stand so close, and therefore are less liable to be struck; for Batteries cannot be thus evenly distributed by single guns at equal intervals over a great space.

(377) In a combat of artillery alone, or in one in which the artillery plays the principal part, the greater extent of the enveloping front gives an advantage, and a great one too, through the great range of artillery, because that makes a great difference in the extent of the two fronts. This case occurs, for example, with single redoubts. But with Armies in which the other arms of the service take the most prominent part, and artillery only a secondary part, there is not this advantage, because, as already said, there is never any want of space even for the side enveloped.

(378) It is, therefore, principally in infantry combats that the advantage which the greater front affords of bringing greater numbers into action simultaneously must show itself. The difference of the two fronts in such a case amounts to three times the range of the musket (if the envelopment reaches an angle of 180°), that is, about 600 paces. Before a front of 600 paces in length, the enveloping line will then be double, which will be sensibly felt; but before a front of 3000 paces the additional length would only be one-fifth, which is no advantage of any importance.

(379) We may say, therefore, respecting this point, that the length of front is sufficient as soon as the difference resulting from the range of a musket shot ceases to give the enveloping line any very marked superiority.

(380) From what has just been said of the two advantages of enveloping, it follows *that small masses have a difficulty in obtaining the requisite development of front;* this is so true that we know for a fact that they are in most cases obliged to give up their regular order of formation and to extend much more. It rarely happens that a single Battalion, if left to depend on itself, will engage in a combat without extending its front beyond the ordinary length (150 and 200 paces); instead of keeping to that formation it will divide into companies with intervals between them, then again will extend into skirmishers, and after a part is placed in reserve it will take up with the rest, altogether twice, three or four times as much room as it should do normally.

(381) But the greater the masses the easier it is to attain the necessary extension of front, as the front increases with the masses (No. 373), although *not in the same proportion.*

(382) Great masses have, therefore, no necessity to depart from their order of formation, on the contrary, they are able to place troops in rear.

(383) The consequence of this is, that for large masses a kind of standing formation has been introduced, in which portions of the force are drawn up in rear; such is the ordinary order of battle in two lines; usually there is a third one behind, consisting of cavalry, and besides that, also a reserve of one-eighth to one-sixth, &c.

(384) With very large masses (Armies of 100,000 to 150,000 or 200,000) we see the reserves always get greater (one-quarter to one-third), a proof that Armies have a continual tendency to increase further beyond what is required for the extent of front.

(385) We only introduce this now to show more plainly the truth of our demonstration by a glance at facts.

(386) Such, then, is the bearing of the first two advantages of enveloping. It is different with the third.

(387) The first two influence the *certainty* of the result by intensifying our forces, the third does that also, but only with very short fronts.

(388) It acts particularly on the courage of those engaged in the front of the enemy's line by creating a fear of losing their line of retreat, an idea which has always a great influence on soldiers.

(389) This is, however, only the case when the danger of being cut off is so imminent and evident that the impression overpowers all restraints of discipline and of authority, and carries away the soldier involuntarily.

(390) At greater distances, and if the soldier is only led to a sense of danger indirectly by the sound of artillery and musketry in his rear, uneasy feelings may arise within him, but, unless his spirit is already very bad, these will not prevent his obeying the orders of his superiors.

(391) In this case, therefore, the advantage in cutting off the enemy's retreat, which appertains to the enveloping side, cannot be regarded as one which makes success more *secure,* that is, more *probable,* but only as one which *increases* the *extent* of a success already commenced.

(392) In this respect, also, the third advantage of enveloping is subject to the counter-principle, that it is greatest with a short front, and decreases with the extension of front, as is evident.

(393) But this does not set aside the principle that greater masses should have a greater extent of front than small ones, because as a retreat is never made in the whole width of a position, but by certain roads, so it follows of itself that great masses require more time for a retreat than small ones; this longer time therefore imposes the necessity of a larger front, that the enemy who envelops this front may not so speedily gain the points through which the line of retreat passes.

(394) If (in accordance with No. 391) the third advantage of enveloping, in the majority of cases (that is, when the fronts are not too short), only influences the

extent, but not the certainty, of success, then it follows that it will have a very different value, according to the relations and views of the combatants.

(395) When the probability of the result is otherwise small, the first consideration must be to increase the probability; in such a case, therefore, an advantage which relates principally to the extent of the result cannot be of much consequence.

(396) But if this advantage is quite opposed (No. 565) to the probability of success, in such case it becomes a positive disadvantage.

(397) In such a case, endeavour must be made, through the advantage of the successive use of forces, to counterbalance those of the greater extent of front.

(398) We see, therefore, that the point of indifference (or equilibrium) between the two poles of the *simultaneous* and *successive* application of our forces—of *extension of front* and *depth of position*—is differently situated, not only according as the masses are large or small, but also according to the relations and intentions of the respective parties.*

(399) The weaker and the more prudent will give the preference to the successive use, the stronger and the bold to the simultaneous employment of the forces.

(400) It is natural that the assailant should be the *stronger,* or the *bolder,* whether from the character of the Commander or from necessity.

(401) The enclosing form of combat, or that form which implies the simultaneous use of forces on both sides in the highest degree, is, therefore, natural to the assailant.

(402) The enclosed, that is, one limited to the successive application of forces, and which, on that account, is in danger of being surrounded, is, therefore, the natural form of the defensive.

(403) In the first there is the tendency to a quick solution, in the latter to gain time, and these tendencies are in harmony with the object of each form of combat.

(404) But in the nature of the defensive there lies still another motive, which inclines it to the deeper order of battle.

(405) One of its most considerable advantages is the assistance of the country and ground, and local defence of the same constitutes an important element of this advantage.

(406) Now one would think this should lead to the front being made as wide as possible, in order to make the most of this advantage; a one-sided view, which may be regarded as the chief cause of Commanders having been so often led to occupy extensive positions.

(407) But hitherto we have always supposed the extension of front as either causing the enemy to extend, in like manner, or as leading to *outflanking,* that is, to an envelopment of the enemy's front.

(408) As long as we imagine both sides equally active, therefore apart from the point of view of offensive and defensive, the application of a more extended front to envelop the enemy presents no difficulty.

(409) But as soon as we combine more or less local defence with the combat in front (as is done in the defensive), then that application of the overlapping portions of the front ceases; it is either impossible, or very difficult, to combine local defence with outflanking.

(410) In order rightly to appreciate this difficulty, we must always bear in mind the form which the case assumes in reality when our view of an enemy's measures is intercepted by the natural means of cover which the ground affords, and therefore troops employed to defend any particular locality may be easily deceived and held in inactivity.

(411) From this it follows, that in the defensive it is to be considered a decided disadvantage to occupy a greater front than that which the enemy necessarily requires for the deployment of his forces.

(412) The necessary extent of front for the offensive we shall examine hereafter; here we have only to observe, that if the offensive takes up too narrow a front, the defensive does not punish him for it, through having made his own front wide at first, but *by an offensive enveloping counter-movement.*

(413) It is, therefore, certain that the defender, in order that he may not, in any case, incur the disadvantage of too wide a front, will always take up the narrowest which circumstances will permit, for by that means he can place the more troops in reserve; at the same time these reserves are never likely to be left inactive, like portions of a too extended front.

(414) As long as the defender is satisfied with the narrowest front, and seeks to preserve the greatest depth, that is to say, as long as he follows the natural tendency of his form of combat, in the same degree there will be an opposite tendency on the part of the assailant; he will make the extent of his front as *great* as possible, or, in other words, envelop his enemy as far as possible.

(415) But this is a *tendency,* and no *law;* for we have seen that the advantages of this envelopment diminish with the lengths of the fronts; and therefore, at certain points, no longer counterbalance the advantage of the successive application of force. To this law the assailant is subject as well as the defender.

(416) Now, here we have to consider extension of front of two kinds; that which the defender fixes by the position which he takes up, and that which the assailant is obliged to adopt with a view to outflanking his enemy.

(417) If the extension in the first case is so great that all the advantages of outflanking vanish or become ineffective, then that movement must be given up; the assailant must then seek to gain an advantage in another way, as we shall presently see.

(418) But if the defenders' front is as small as can possibly be, if the assailant, at the same time, has a right to look for advantages by outflanking and enveloping, still, again, the limits of this envelopment must be fixed.

(419) This limit is determined by the disadvantages inherent in any enveloping movement which is carried too far (Nos. 356 and 365).

(420) These disadvantages arise when the envelopment is attempted against a front exceeding the length which would justify the movement; but they are evidently very much greater if the fault consists in too wide an envelopment of a short line.

(421) When the assailant has these disadvantages against him, then the advantages of the enemy in the successive employment of force through his short line must tell with more weight.

(422) Now, it certainly appears that the defender who adopts the narrow front and deep order of battle does not thereby retain all the advantages of the successive use of forces on his side: for if the assailant adopts a front as small, and, therefore, does not outflank his enemy, then it is possible for both equally to resort to the successive use of their forces; but if the assailant envelops his opponent, then the latter must oppose a front in every direction in which he is threatened, and, therefore, fight with the same extent of front (except the trifling difference between the extent of concentric circles, which is not worth noticing). With respect to this there are four points which claim our attention.

(423) In the first place, let the assailant contract his front as much as he pleases, there is always an advantage for the defender in the combat changing from the form of one in extended order and which will be quickly decided into one which is concentrated and prolonged, for the prolongation of the combat is in favour of the defensive.

(424) Secondly, the defender, even if enveloped by his adversary, is not always obliged to oppose a parallel front to each of the Divisions surrounding him; he may attack them in flank or rear, for which the geometrical relations are just those which afford the best opportunity; but this is at once a successive use of forces, for in that it is not at all a necessary condition that the troops employed later should be employed exactly as the first used, or that the last brought forward should take up the ground occupied by the first, as we shall see presently more plainly. Without placing troops in reserve it would not be possible to *envelop the enveloping force* in this manner.

(425) Thirdly, by the short front, with strong reserves in rear, there is a possibility of the enemy carrying his enveloping movement too far (No. 420), of which advantage may then be taken, just by means of the forces placed in rear in reserve.

(426) Fourthly, in the last place, there is an advantage to the defender in being secured by this means against the opposite error of a waste of force, through portions of the front not being attacked.

(427) These are the advantages of a deep order of battle, that is, of the successive employment of forces. They not only check over-extension on the part of the defender, but also stop the assailant from overstepping certain limits in enveloping; without, however, stopping the tendency to extend within these limits.

(428) But this tendency will be weakened or completely done away with if the defender has extended himself too far.

(429) Under these circumstances certainly the defender, being deficient in masses in reserve, cannot punish the assailant for his too great extension in his attempt to envelop, but the advantages of the envelopment are, as it is, too small in such a case.

(430) The assailant will, therefore, now no longer seek the advantages of enveloping if his relations are not such that cutting off is a point of great importance to him. In this way, therefore, the tendency to enveloping is diminished.

(431) But it will be entirely done away with if the defender has taken up a front of such extent that the assailant can leave a great part of it inactive, for that is to him a decided gain.

(432) In such cases, the assailant ceases to look for advantages in extension and developing, and looks for them in the opposite direction, that is, in the concentration of his forces against some one point. It is easy to perceive that this signifies the same as a deep order of battle.

(433) How far the assailant may carry the contraction of the front of his position, depends on—

(*a*) The size of the masses,
(*b*) The extent of the enemy's front, and
(*c*) His state of preparation to assume a counter-offensive.

(434) With small forces it is disadvantageous to leave any part of the enemy's front inactive; for, as the spaces are small, everything can be seen, and such parts can on the instant be applied to active purposes elsewhere.

(435) From this follows of itself, that also with larger masses and fronts the front attacked must not be too small, because otherwise the disadvantage just noticed would arise, at least partially.

(436) But, in general, it is natural that when the assailant has good reason to seek for his advantage in a concentration of his forces, on account of the excessive extension of front, or the passivity of the defender, he can go further in contracting the extent of his front than the defender, because the latter, through the too great extension of his

front, is not prepared for an offensive counteraction against the enveloping movement.

(437) The greater the front of the defender, the greater will be the number of its parts which the assailant can leave unassailed.

(438) The same will be the case the more the intention of local defensive is distinctly pronounced;

(439) And, lastly, the greater the masses are generally.

(440) The assailant will therefore find the most advantage in a concentration of his forces if all these favourable circumstances are combined, namely, large masses, too long a front, and a great deal of local defence on the part of the enemy.

(441) This subject cannot be finished until we examine the relations of space.

(442) We have already shown (No. 291) the use of the successive employment of forces. We have only here to call the attention of our readers to the point that the motives for it relate not only to the renewal of the *same combat* with fresh troops, but also to every subsequent (or ulterior) employment of reserve troops.

(443) In this *subsequent* use, there is *supreme advantage,* as will be seen in the sequel.

(444) From the preceding exposition, we see that the point where the simultaneous and the successive use of troops balance each other is different, according to the *mass of troops in reserve,* according to the *proportion of Force,* according to *situation* and *object,* according to *Boldness* and *Prudence.*

(445) That country and ground have likewise a great influence, is, of course, understood, and it only receives this bare mention, because all application is here left out of sight.

(446) With such manifold connections and complex relations, no absolute numbers can be fixed as normal quantities; but there must still be some unit which serves as a fixed point for these complex changeable relations.

(447) Now there are two such guides, one on each side first a certain depth, which allows of the simultaneous action of all the forces, may be looked upon as one guide. To reduce this depth for the sake of increasing the extension of front must therefore be regarded as a necessary evil. This, therefore, determines the *necessary depth.* The second guide is the security of the reserve, of which we have already spoken. This determines *the necessary extension.*

(448) The necessary depth just mentioned lies at the foundation of all standing formations; we shall not be able to prove this until hereafter, when we come to treat specially of the order of the (three) arms.

(449) But before we can bring our general considerations to a final conclusion, in anticipation of the above result, we must inquire into the determination of place, as that has some influence upon it likewise.

Determination Of Place.

(450) The determination of place answers the question where the combat is to be, as well for the whole as for the parts.

(451) The place of combat for the whole emanates from Strategy, with which we are not now concerned. We have only here to deal with the construction of the combat; we must, therefore, suppose that both parties have come into contact, the place of the combat will then generally be either where the enemy's Army is (*in the attack*), or where we can wait for it (*on the defensive*).

(452) As regards the determination of place for the members of the whole, it decides the geometrical form which the combatants on both sides should assume in the combat.

(453) We leave out of sight at present the forms of detail which are contained in the regular (normal) formation which we shall consider afterwards.

(454) The geometrical form of the whole may be reduced to two types—namely, to the parallel, and to that in concentric segments of circles. Every other form runs into one of these.

(455) In fact, whatever parts are supposed to be in actual conflict must be supposed in parallel lines. If, therefore, an Army should deploy perpendicularly to the alignment of the other, the latter must either change its front *completely,* and place itself parallel with the other, or it must at least do so with a portion of its line. But in the latter case, the other Army must then wheel round that portion of its line against which no part of the enemy's line has wheeled, if it is to be brought into use; and thus arises an order of battle in concentric pieces of circles or polygonal parts.

(456) The rectilinear order is plainly to be considered as indifferent, for the relations of the two parties are precisely alike.

(457) But we cannot say that the rectilinear form only arises from the direct and parallel attack (as appears at first sight); it may also take place by the defensive placing himself parallel to an oblique attack. In this case the other circumstances will not certainly always be alike, for often the new position will not be good, often it will not be quite carried out, &c. We now anticipate this, only in order to guard against a confusion of ideas. The indifference which we see in this case lies only in the form of the order of battle.

(458) The nature of the form in concentric segments of circles (or portions of polygons, which is the same), has been already sufficiently developed; it is the *enveloping* and *enveloped* order.

(459) The question of the placing of the parts in space would be fully settled by the geometrical form of the normal order of battle if it was necessary that some of our troops should be opposed to those of the enemy in every direction. This, however, is not necessary; it is much more a question in each particular case: *should all parts of the enemy's line be engaged or not?* and in the latter case, *which?*

(460) If we can leave a part of the enemy's force unattacked, we become by that means stronger for the contest with the rest, either by the simultaneous or successive use of our forces. By that means *a part* of the enemy's force may have to contend with the *whole of our Army.*

(461) Thus we shall either be completely superior to the enemy at the points at which we want our forces, or we shall at least have a stronger force than the general relations between the two Armies would give.

(462) But these points may be taken to represent the *whole,* provided that we need not engage the others; there is, therefore, an artificial augmentation of our forces, by a greater concentration of the same in space.

(463) It is evident that this means forms a most important element in any plan of a battle; it is that which is most generally used.

(464) The point now is therefore to examine this subject closer, in order to determine the parts of an enemy's force which in this sense should be taken to constitute the whole.

(465) We have stated (in No. 4), the motives which determine the retreat of one of the combatants in a battle. It is plain that the circumstances from which these motives arise affect either the whole of the force, or at least such an essential part of it as surpasses all the rest in importance, and therefore carries them along with it in its fate.

(466) That these circumstances affect the whole of the force we can easily conceive if the mass is small, but not if it is large. In such case certainly the motives given under *d, f, g* concern the whole, but the others, especially the *loss,* affect only certain parts, for with large masses it is extremely improbable that all parts have suffered alike.

(467) Now those parts whose condition is the cause of a retreat must naturally be considerable in relation to the whole; we shall for brevity's sake call them the *vanquished.*

(468) These vanquished parts may either be contiguous to each other, or they may be more or less interspersed through the whole.

(469) There is no reason to consider the one case as more decisive than the other. If one Corps of an Army is completely beaten but all the rest intact, that may be in one case worse, in another better than if the losses had been uniformly distributed over the whole Army.

(470) The second case supposes *an equal* employment of the opposing forces; but we are only occupied at present with the effect of an *unequal* application of forces, one that is concentrated more at a single or at certain points; we have, therefore, only to do with the first case.

(471) If the vanquished parts are close to each other, they may be regarded collectively as a whole, and we mean it to be so understood when we speak of the *divisions* or *points* attacked or beaten.

(472) If we can determine the situation and relation of that part which dominates over and will carry the whole along with it in its fate, then we have by that means also discovered the part of the whole against which the forces intended to fight the real struggle must be directed.

(473) If we leave out of sight all circumstances of ground, we have only position and magnitude (numbers) by which to determine the part to be attacked. We shall first consider the numbers.

(474) Here there are two cases to be distinguished; the first, if we unite our forces against *a part* of the enemy's and *oppose none to the rest of his Army;* the second, if we oppose to the remaining part a *small force merely to occupy it.* Each is plainly a concentration of forces in space.

(475) The first of these questions, viz., how large a part of the enemy's force must we necessarily engage, is evidently the same as *to how small can we make the width of our front?* We have already discussed that subject in No. 433 and following.

(476) In order the better to explain the subject in the second case, we shall begin by supposing the enemy to be as positive and active as ourselves; it follows in such case that if we take steps to beat the smaller portion of his Army with the larger fraction of our own, he will do the same on his side.

(477) Therefore, if we would have the total result in our favour, we must so arrange that the part of the enemy's Army which we mean to defeat shall bear a greater proportion to his whole force than the portion of our force which we risk losing bears to the whole of our Army.

(478) If, for instance, we would employ in the principal action three-fourths of our force, and use one-fourth for the occupation of that part of the enemy's Army not attacked, then the portion of the enemy's Army which we engage seriously should exceed one-fourth, should be about one-third. In this case, if the result is for us on one side, and against us on the other, still, with three-fourths of our force, we have beaten one-third of the enemy's; whilst he, with two-thirds of his, has only conquered one-fourth of ours—the advantage is, therefore, manifestly in our favour.

(479) If we *are so superior* to the enemy in numbers that three-fourths of our force is sufficient to ensure us a victory over half of his, then the total result would be still more to our advantage.

(480) The stronger we are in numbers relatively the greater may be that portion of the enemy's force which we engage seriously, and the greater will then be the result. The weaker we are, the smaller must be the portion seriously attacked, which is in accordance with the natural law, *that the weak should concentrate his forces the most.*

(481) But, in all this, it is tacitly supposed that the enemy is occupied as long in beating our weak division as we are in completing our victory over the larger portion of his force. Should this not be so, and that there is a considerable difference in time, then he might still be able to use a further part of his troops against our principal force.

(482) But now, as a rule, a victory is gained quicker in proportion as the inequality between the contending forces is greater; hence, we cannot make the force which we risk losing as small as we please; it must bear a reasonable proportion to the enemy's force, which it is to keep occupied. Concentration has, therefore, limits on the weaker side.

(483) The supposition made in No. 476, is, however, very seldom realised. Usually, a part of the defender's force is tied to some locality, so that he is not able to use the *lex talionis* as quickly as is necessary; when that is the case, the assailant, in concentrating his forces, may even somewhat exceed the above proportion, and, if he can beat one-third of the enemy's force with two-thirds of his, there is still a probability of success for him in the total result, because the remaining one-third of his force will hardly get into difficulty to an equal degree.

(484) But it would be wrong to go further with this train of reasoning, and draw the conclusion, that if the defensive took no positive action at all against the weaker portion of the assailant's force (a case which very often happens), victory would likewise follow in that case also in favour of the assailant; for, in cases in which the party attacked does not seek to indemnify himself on the weaker portion of the enemy's force, his chief reason for not doing so is because he has still the means of making the victory of our principal force doubtful, by bringing into action against it a portion of that part of his Army which has not been attacked.

(485) The smaller the portion of the enemy's force which we attack, the more possible this becomes, partly on account of spaces and distance being less, partly, and more especially, because the moral power of victory over a smaller mass is so very much less; if the mass of the enemy's force which is conquered is small, he does not so soon lose head and heart to apply his still remaining means to the work of restoration.

(486) It is only if the enemy is in such a position that he is neither able to do the one nor the other—that is, neither to indemnify himself by a positive victory over our weaker portion, nor to bring forward his spare forces to oppose the principal attack, or if irresolution prevents his doing so—that then the assailant can hope to conquer him with even a relatively very small force, by means of concentration.

(487) Theory must not, however, leave it to be inferred that it is the defender only who is subject to the disadvantage of not being able to indemnify himself properly for

the concentration of forces made by his adversary; it has also to point out that *either of the two parties,* either the assailant or the defender, may be involved in such a situation.

(488) The assemblage of forces more than are proportionate at some one point, in order to be superior in numbers at that point is, in point of fact, always founded on the hope of *surprising* the enemy, so that he shall neither have time to bring up sufficient forces to the spot nor to set on foot measures of retaliation. The hope of the surprise succeeding, founds itself essentially on the resolution being the earliest made, that is on the initiative.

(489) But this advantage of the initiative has also again its disadvantage, of which more will be said hereafter; we merely remark here, that it is no *absolute* advantage, the effects of which must show themselves in all cases.

(490) But if we even leave out of consideration the grounds for the success of an intended surprise which are contained in the initiative, so that no objective motive remains, and that success has nothing on its side but luck, still, even that is not to be rejected in theory, for War is a game from which it is impossible to exclude *venture.* It, therefore, remains allowable, in the absence of all other motives, to concentrate a part of our forces on a venture, in the hope of surprising the enemy with them.

(491) If the surprise succeeds on either side, whether it be the offensive or defensive side which succeeds, there will follow a certain inability on the part of the force surprised to redress itself by a retaliatory stroke.

(492) As yet we have been engaged in the consideration of the proportions of the part or point to be attacked, we now come to its position.

(493) If we leave out every local and other particular circumstance, then we can only distinguish *the wings, flanks, rear* and *centre,* as points which have peculiarities of their own.

(494) The *wings,* because there we may turn the enemy's force.

(495) The *flanks,* because we may expect to fight them upon a spot on which the enemy is not prepared, and to impede his retreat.

(496) The *rear,* just the same as the flanks, only that the expectation of obstructing or completely intercepting his retreat is here more predominant.

(497) But in this action against flanks and rear, the supposition is necessarily implied that we can compel the enemy to oppose forces to us there; when we are not certain that our appearance there will have this effect, the measure becomes dangerous: for where there is no enemy to attack, we are inactive, and if this is the case with the principal body, we should undoubtedly miss our object.

(498) Such a case as that of an enemy uncovering his flanks and rear certainly occurs very rarely, still it does happen, and most easily, when the enemy indemnifies himself

by offensive counter-enterprises (Wagram, Hohenlinden, Austerlitz, are examples which may be quoted here).

(499) The attack of the centre (by which we understand nothing else than a part of the front, which is not a wing), has this property, that it may lead to a separation of parts which is commonly termed *breaking the line.*

(500) Breaking the line is plainly the opposite of envelopment. Both measures, in the event of victory, have a very destructive effect on the enemy's forces, but each in a different manner, that is:

(*a*) Envelopment contributes to the certainty of the result, by its moral effect in lowering the courage of the enemy's troops.

(*b*) Breaking the centre contributes to ensure success by enabling us to keep our forces more united together. We have already treated of both.

(*c*) The envelopment may lead directly to the destruction of the enemy's Army, if it is made with very superior numbers, and succeeds. If it leads to victory, the early results are in every case greater by that means than by breaking the enemy's line.

(*d*) Breaking the enemy's line can only lead indirectly to the destruction of his Army, and its effects are hardly shown so much on the first day, but rather strategically afterwards.

(501) The breaking through the enemy's Army by massing our principal force against one point, supposes an excessive length of front on the part of the enemy; for in this form of attack the difficulty of occupying the remainder of the enemy's force with few troops is greater, because the enemy's forces nearest to the principal attack may easily join in opposing it. Now, in an attack on the centre, there are such forces on both sides; in an attack on a flank, only on one side.

(502) The consequence of this is, that such a central attack may easily end in a very disadvantageous form of combat, through a convergent counter-attack.

(503) The choice, therefore, between these two points of attack must be made according to the existing relations of the moment. Length of front, the nature and direction of the line of retreat, the military qualities of the enemy's troops and characteristics of their General, lastly, the ground must determine the choice. We shall consider these subjects more fully in the sequel.

(504) We have supposed the concentration of forces at one point for the real attack; but it may, no doubt, also take place at several points, at *two* or *three,* without ceasing to be *a concentration* of forces against a *part* of the enemy's force. At the same time, no doubt, by every increase in the number of points the strength of the principal is weakened.

(505) As yet we have only taken into view the objective advantages of such a concentration, that is, a more favourable relation of force at the capital point; but there

is also a subjective motive for the Commander or General, which is, that he keeps the principal parts of his force more in hand.

(506) Although in a battle, the will of the General and his intelligence conduct the whole, still this will and this intelligence can only reach the lower ranks much diluted, and the further the troops are from the General-in-Chief the more will this be the case; the importance and independence of subordinates then increase, and that at the expense of the supreme will.

(507) But it is both natural, and as long as no anomaly arises also advantageous, that the Commander-in-Chief should retain direct control to the utmost extent which circumstances will allow.

Reciprocal Action

(508) In respect to the application of forces in combat, we have now exhausted everything which can be deduced generally from the nature of those forces.

(509) We have only one subject still to examine, which is the reciprocal action of the plans and acts of the two sides.

(510) As the plan of combat, properly so called, can only determine so much of the action as can be foreseen, it limits itself usually to three things, viz.:—

(*a*) The general outline.
(*b*) The preparations.
(*c*) The details of the commencement.

(511) Nothing but the commencement can in reality be laid down completely by the plan: the progress demands new arrangements and orders, proceeding from circumstances: these are the *conduct* of the battle.

(512) Naturally, it is desirable that the principles of the plan should be followed in the conduct, for means and end always remain the same; therefore, if it cannot always be done, we can only look upon that as an imperfection which cannot be avoided.

(513) The conduct of a battle is undeniably a very different thing to making a *plan* for one. The latter is done out of the region of danger, and in perfect leisure; the former always takes place under the pressure of the moment. The plan always decides things from a more *elevated* standpoint, with a *wider* sphere of vision: the *conduct* is regulated by, indeed is often forcibly carried away by, that which is the *nearest and most individual.* We shall speak hereafter of the difference in the character of these two functions of the intelligence, but here we leave them out of consideration, and content ourselves with having drawn a line between them as distinct epochs.

(514) If we imagine both parties in this situation, that neither of them knows anything of the dispositions of his opponent, then each of them can only make his own conformably with the general principles of theory. A great part of this lies already in

the formation, and in the so-called *elementary tactics* of an Army, which are naturally founded only on what is general.

(515) But it is evident that a disposition which only rests upon that which is general can never have the same efficacy with that which is built upon individual circumstances.

(516) Consequently, it must be a very great advantage to combine our dispositions *after* the enemy, and with reference to those of the enemy, it is the advantage of the second hand at cards.

(517) Seldom, if ever, is a battle arranged without special regard to individual circumstances. The first circumstance, of which there must always be some knowledge, is the *ground.*

(518) In knowledge of the ground the defender has the advantage in general in an especial degree; for he alone knows exactly and *beforehand* the spot on which the battle is to take place; and, therefore, has time to examine the locality fully. Here is the root of the whole theory of positions, in as far as it belongs to tactics.

(519) The assailant, certainly, also examines the ground before the fight commences, but only imperfectly, for the defender is in possession of it, and does not allow him to make a full examination everywhere. Whatever he can, in some measure, ascertain from a distance, serves him to lay down his plan.

(520) If the defender, besides the advantage of the mere knowledge of the ground, makes another use of it—if he makes use of it for local defence—the result is a more or less *definite disposition* of his forces *in detail;* by that means his adversary may find out his plans, and take them into account in making his own.

(521) This is, therefore, the first calculation made on the enemy's actual moves.

(522) In most cases this is to be regarded as the stage at which the plans of both parties end; that which takes place subsequently belongs to the conduct.

(523) In combats in which neither of the two parties can be considered as really the defender, because both advance to the encounter, formation, order of battle, and elementary tactics (as regular disposition somewhat modified by ground) come in in place of a plan properly so called.

(524) This happens very frequently with small bodies, seldom with large masses.

(525) But if action is divided into attack and defence, then the assailant, as far as respects reciprocal action, has evidently the advantage at the stage mentioned in No. 522. It is true that he has assumed the initiative, but his opponent, by his defensive dispositions, has been obliged to disclose, in great part, what he means to do.

(526) This is the ground on which, in theory, the attack has been hitherto considered as by far the most advantageous form of combat.

(527) But to regard the attack as the most advantageous, or, to use a more distinct expression, as the *strongest* form of combat, leads to an absurdity, as we shall show hereafter. This has been overlooked.

(528) The error in the conclusion arises from overvaluing the advantage mentioned in No. 525. That advantage is important in connection with the reciprocal action, but that is not *everything.* To be able to make use of the ground as an ally, and thereby, to a certain extent, to increase our forces, is in very many cases of greater importance, and might be, in most cases, with proper dispositions.*

(529) But wrong use of ground (very extended positions) and a false system of defence (pure passivity) have no doubt given to the advantage which the assailant has of keeping his measures in the background an undue importance, and to these errors alone the attack is indebted for the successes which it obtains in practice, beyond the natural measure of its efficacy.

(530) As the influence of the intelligence is not confined to the plan properly so called, we must pursue our examination of the reciprocal action through the *province of the conduct.*

(531) The *course or duration* of the battle is the province of the conduct of the battle; but this duration is greater in proportion as the successive use of forces is more employed.

(532) Therefore, where much depends on the conduct, there must be a great depth in the order of battle.

(533) Now arises the question whether it is better to trust more to the plan or to the conduct.

(534) It were evidently absurd knowingly to leave unexamined any datum which may come to hand, or to leave it out of account in our deliberations, if it has any value as regards the proposed course of action. But that is as much as to say that the plan should prescribe the course of action as far as there are available data, and that the field of the *conduct* is only to commence where the plan no longer suffices. The conduct is therefore only a substitute for a plan, and so far is to be regarded as a *necessary evil.*

(535) But let it be quite understood, we are only speaking of *plans* for which there are *real motives.* Dispositions which have necessarily an individual tendency must not be founded upon arbitrary hypothesis, but upon regular data.

(536) Where, therefore, data are wanting, there the fixed dispositions of the plan should cease, for it is plainly better that *a thing* should remain *undetermined,* that is, be placed under the care of general principles, than that it should be determined in a manner not adapted to circumstances which subsequently arise.

(537) Every plan which enters too much into the detail of the course of the combat is therefore faulty and ruinous, for detail does not depend merely on general grounds, but on other particulars which it is impossible to know beforehand.

(538) When we reflect how the influence of single circumstances (accidental as well as others) increases with time and space, we may see how it is that very wide and complex movements seldom succeed, and that they often lead to disaster.

(539) Here lies the chief cause of the danger of all very complex and elaborate plans of battles. They are all founded, often without its being known, on a mass of insignificant suppositions, a great part of which prove inexact.

(540) In place of unduly extending the plan, it is better to leave rather more to the *conduct.*

(541) But this supposes (according to 532) a deep order of battle, that is, strong reserves.

(542) We have seen (525) that as respects reciprocal action, the attack reaches furthest in his plan.

(543) On the other hand, the defensive, through (knowledge of) the ground, has many reasons to determine beforehand the course of his combat, that is, to enter far into his plan.

(544) Were we to stop at this point of view, we should say that the plans of the defensive reach much further than those of the offensive; and that, therefore, the latter leaves much more to the conduct.

(545) But this advantage of the defensive only exists in appearance, not in reality. We must be careful not to forget that the dispositions which relate to the ground are only *preparatory measures* founded upon suppositions, not upon any actual measures of the enemy.

(546) It is only because these suppositions are in general very probable, and *only when* they are so, that they, as well as the dispositions based on them, have any real value.

(547) But this condition attaching to the suppositions of the defender, and the measures which he therefore adopts, naturally limits these very much, and compels him to be very circumspect in his plans and dispositions.

(548) If he has *gone too far* with them, the assailant may slip away, and then there is on the spot a dead power, that is, a *waste of power.*

(549) Such may be the effect of positions which are too extended, and the too frequent use of local defence.

(550) Both these very errors have often shown the injury to the defender from an undue extension of his plan, and the advantage which the offensive may derive from a rational extension of his.

(551) Only very strong positions give the plans of the defensive more scope than the plan of the assailant can have, *but* they must be positions *which are strong in every point of view.*

(552) On the other hand, in proportion as the position available is only indifferently good, or that no suitable one is to be found, or that time is wanting to prepare one, in the same measure will the defender remain behind the assailant in the determination of his plans, and have to trust the more to the conduct.

(553) This result therefore shows again that it is the defender who must more particularly look to the successive use of forces.

(554) We have seen before that only large masses can have the advantage of a narrow front, and we may now perceive additional motives for the defender to guard himself against the danger of *an undue extension of his plan—a ruinous scattering of his forces on account of the nature of the ground*—and further that he should place his security in the aid which lies in the conduct, that is, in strong reserves.

(555) From this the evident deduction is, that the relation of the defence to the attack improves in proportion as the masses increase.

(556) Duration of the combat, that is, *strong reserves,* and *the successive use of them as much as possible,* constitute, therefore, the first condition in the *conduct;* and the advantage in these things must bring with it superiority in the conduct apart from the talent of him who applies them; for the highest talent cannot be brought into full play without means, and we may very well imagine that the one who is less skilful, but has the most means at command, gains the upper hand in the course of the combat.

(557) Now, there is still a second objective condition which confers in general an advantage in the conduct, and this is quite on the side of the defensive: it is the acquaintance with the country. What advantage this must give when resolutions are required which must be made without examination, and in the pressure of events, is evident in itself.

(558) It lies in the nature of things that the determinations of the *plan* concern more the divisions of *higher order,* and those of *the conduct* more the *inferior* ones; consequently that each single determination of the latter is of lesser importance; but as these latter are naturally much more numerous, the difference in importance between plan and conduct is by that means partly balanced.

(559) Further, it lies in the nature of the thing that reciprocal action has its own special field in the conduct: and also that it never ceases there because the two parties are in sight of each other; and consequently that it either causes or modifies the greatest part of the dispositions.

(560) Now, if the defender is *specially* led by his interest to save up forces for the conduct (No. 553), if he has a general advantage in their use (No. 557), it follows that he can, by superiority in the conduct, not only make good the disadvantage in which he is placed by the reciprocal action out of the plans, but also attain a superiority in the reciprocal action generally.

(561) Whatever may be the relation in this respect between the opposing parties, in particular cases, up to a certain point there will always be an endeavour to be the last to take measures, in order to be able, when doing so, to take those of the enemy into account.

(562) This endeavour is the real ground of the much stronger reserves which are brought into use in large Armies in modern times.

(563) We have no hesitation in saying that in this means there is, next to ground, the best principle of defence for all considerable masses.

Character Of Command

(564) We have said that there is a difference between the character of the determinations which form the plan and those which form the conduct of a battle: the cause of this is, that the circumstances under which the intelligence does its work are different.

(565) This difference of circumstances consists in three things in particular, namely, in the want of data, in the want of time, and in danger.

(566) Things which, had we a complete view of the situation, and of all the great interrelations, would be to us of primary importance, may not be so if that complete view is wanting; other things, therefore, and, as a matter of course, circumstances more distinct, then become predominant.

(567) Consequently, if the plan of a combat is more a geometrical drawing, then the conduct (or command) is more a perspective one; the former is more a ground plan, the latter more of a picture. How this defect may be repaired we shall see hereafter.

(568) The want of time, besides limiting our ability to make a general survey of objects, has also an influence on the power of reflection. It is less a judicial, deliberative, critical judgment than mere tact; that is, a readiness of *judgment* acquired by practice, which is then effective. This we must also bear in mind.

(569) That the immediate feeling of danger (to ourselves and others) should influence the bare understanding is in human nature.

(570) If, then, the judgment of the understanding is in that way fettered and weakened, where can it fly to for support?—Only to courage.

(571) Here, plainly, courage of a two-fold kind is requisite: courage not to be overpowered by personal danger, and courage to calculate upon the uncertain, and upon that to frame a course of action.

(572) The second is usually called courage of the mind (*courage d'esprit*); for the first there is no name which satisfies the law of antithesis, because the other term just mentioned is not itself correct.

(573) If we ask ourselves what is courage in its original sense, it is *personal sacrifice in danger;* and from this point we must also start, for upon it everything rests at last.

(574) Such a feeling of devotion may proceed from two sources of quite different kinds; first, from indifference to danger, whether it proceeds from the organism of the individual, indifference to life, or habituation to danger; and secondly, from a positive motive—love of glory, love of country, enthusiasm of any kind.

(575) The first only is to be regarded as true courage which is inborn, or has become second nature; and it has this characteristic, that it is completely identified with the being, therefore never fails.

(576) It is different with the courage which springs from positive feelings. These place themselves in opposition to the impressions of danger, and therefore all depends naturally on their relation to the same. There are cases in which they are far more powerful than indifference to the sense of danger; there are others in which it is the most powerful. The one (indifference to danger) leaves the judgment cool, and leads to *stedfastness;* the other (feeling) makes men more enterprising, and leads to *boldness.*

(577) If with such positive impulses the indifference to danger is combined, there is, then, the most complete personal courage.

(578) The courage we have as yet been considering is something quite subjective, it relates merely to personal sacrifice, and may, on that account, be called *personal courage.*

(579) But, now, it is natural that any one who places no great value on the sacrifice of his own person will not rate very high the offering up of others (who, in consequence of his position, are made subject to his will). He looks upon them as property which he can dispose of just like his own person.

(580) In like manner, he who through some positive feeling is drawn into danger, will either infuse this feeling into others or think himself justified in making them subservient to his feelings.

(581) In both ways courage gets an *objective sphere of action.* It both stimulates self-sacrifice and influences the use of the forces made subject to it.

(582) When courage has excluded from the mind all over-vivid impressions of danger, it acts on the faculties of the understanding. These become free, because they are no longer under the pressure of anxiety.

(583) But it will certainly not create powers of understanding, where they have no existence, still less will it beget discernment.

(584) Therefore, where there is a want of understanding and of discernment, courage may often lead to very wrong measures.

(585) Of quite another origin is that courage which has been termed courage of the mind. It springs from a conviction of the necessity of venturing, or even from a superior judgment to which the risk appears less than it does to others.

(586) This conviction may also spring up in men who have no personal courage; but it only becomes courage, that is to say, it only becomes a power which supports the man and keeps up his equanimity under the pressure of the moment and of danger, when it reacts on the feelings, awakens and elevates their nobler powers; but on this account the expression, *courage of the mind,* is not quite correct, for it never springs from the intelligence itself. But that the mind may give rise to feelings, and that these feelings, by the continued influence of the thinking faculties, may be intensified every one knows by experience.

(587) Whilst, on the one hand, personal courage supports, and, by that means, heightens the powers of the mind, on the other hand, the conviction of the mind awakens and animates the emotional powers; the two approach each other, and may combine, that is, produce one and the same result in command. This, however, seldom happens. The manifestations of courage have generally something of the character of their origin.

(588) When great personal courage is united to high intelligence, then the command must naturally be nearest to perfection.

(589) The courage proceeding from convictions of the reason is naturally connected chiefly with the incurring of risks in reliance on uncertain things and of good fortune, and has less to do with personal danger; for the latter cannot easily become a cause of much intellectual activity.

(590) We see, therefore, that in the conduct of the combat, that is, in the tumult of the moment and of danger, the feeling powers support the mind, and the latter must awaken the powers of feeling.

(591) Such a lofty condition of soul is requisite if the judgment, without a full view, without leisure, under the most violent pressure of passing events, is to make resolutions which shall hit the right point. This may be called military talent.

(592) If we consider a combat with its mass of great and small branches, and the actions proceeding from these, it strikes us at once that the courage which proceeds

from personal devotion predominates in the inferior region, that is, rules more over the secondary branches, the other, more over the higher.

(593) The further we descend the order of this distribution, so much the simpler becomes the action, therefore the more nearly common sense becomes all that is required, but so much the greater becomes the personal danger, and consequently personal courage is so much the more required.

(594) The higher we ascend in this order, the more important and the more fraught with consequences becomes the action of individuals, because the subjects decided by individuals are more or less those on which the whole is dependent. From this it follows that the power of taking a general and comprehensive view is the more required.

(595) Now certainly the higher position has always a wider horizon—overlooks the whole much better than a lower one; still the most commanding view which can be obtained in a high position in the course of an action is insufficient, and it is therefore, also, chiefly there where so much must be done by tact of judgment, and in reliance on good fortune.

(596) This becomes always more the characteristic of the command as the combat advances, for as the combat advances, the condition of things deviates so much the further from the first state with which we were acquainted.

(597) The longer the combat has lasted, the more accidents (that is, events not calculated upon) have taken place in it; therefore the more everything has loosened itself from the bonds of regularity, the more everything appears disorderly and confused here and there.

(598) But the further the combat is advanced, the more the decisions begin to multiply themselves, the faster they follow in succession, the less time remains for consideration.

(599) Thus it happens that by degrees even the higher branches—especially at particular points and moments—are drawn into the vortex, where personal courage is worth more than reflection, and constitutes almost everything.

(600) In this way in every combat the combinations exhaust themselves gradually, and at last it is almost courage alone which continues to fight and act.

(601) We see, therefore, that it is courage, and intelligence elevated by it, which have to overcome the difficulties that oppose themselves to the execution of command. How far they can do so or not is not the question, *because* the adversary is in the same situation; our errors and mistakes, therefore, in the majority of cases, will be balanced by his. But that which is an important point is that we should not be *inferior* to the adversary in courage and intelligence, but above all things in the first.

(602) At the same time there is still one quality which is here of great importance: *it is the tact of judgment.* This is not purely an inborn talent; it is chiefly practice which

familiarises us with facts and appearances, and makes the discovery of the truth, therefore a right judgment, *almost habitual.* Herein consists the chief value of experience in War, as well as the great advantage which it gives an Army.

(603) Lastly, we have still to observe that, if circumstances in the conduct of War always invest what is near with an undue importance over that which is higher or more remote, this imperfect view of things can only be compensated for by the Commander, in the uncertainty as to whether he has done right, seeking to make his action at least *decisive.* This will be done if he strives to realise all the possible results which can be derived from it. In this manner the whole (of the action), which should always if possible be conducted from a high standpoint, where such a point cannot be attained, will at least be carried in some certain direction from a secondary point.

We shall try to make this plainer by an illustration. When in the tempest of a great battle a General of Division is thrown out of his connection with the general plan, and is uncertain whether he should still risk an attack or not, then if he resolves upon making an attack, in doing so the only way to feel satisfied, both as regards his own action and the whole battle, is by striving not merely to make his attack successful, but also to obtain such a success as will repair any reverse which may have in the meantime occurred at other points.

(604) Such a course of action is called in a restricted sense resolute. The view, therefore, which we have here given—namely, that chance can only be governed in this manner—leads to *resolution,* which prevents any half-measures, and is the most brilliant quality in the conduct of a great battle.

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ERRATA

VOL. I.

Page 106, line 21, *for* “mean sleft” *read* “means left.”

Page 161, line 1, *for* “chap. v.” *read* “chap. vi.”

Page 161, line 15, *for* “Feuquieres” *read* “Fenquieres.”

Page 163, line 1, *for* “chap. v.” *read* “chap. vi.”

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[*]Here follows in the MS. this note: “Development of this subject after Book III. in the essay on the Culminating Point of Victory.”

Under this title, in an envelope endorsed “*Various dissertations as tomaterials,*” an essay has been found which appears to be a revision of the chapter here only sketched; it will be found at the end of the seventh book.—Editor’s Note.

[*]Gravelotte, St. Privat, August 18, 1870, is a modern instance of groping. The position of the French right wing was not definitely ascertained till a couple of hours after the fighting began. The apparently premature attack of the Prussian Guard corps on St. Privat was brought about by the imperative necessity of obtaining a decision before darkness.—Editor.

[*]In connection with this chapter, Napoleon’s defence of the Elbe in 1813 should be carefully studied.—Editor.

[*]It must be remembered that when Clausewitz wrote, artillery did not possess anything approaching its modern shell-power or range which gives convergence.—Editor.

[*]*See* Chapters IV. and V.

[*]Book I., Chapter I.

[†]*Ibid.*

[‡]Book VII., Chapters IV. and V. (Culminating Point of Victory).

[*]Had Frederick the Great gained the Battle of Kollin, and taken prisoners the chief Austrian Army with the two Field-Marshals in Prague, it would have been such a tremendous blow that he might then have entertained the idea of marching to Vienna to make the Austrian Court tremble, and gain a peace directly. This, in these times, unparalleled result, which would have been quite like what we have seen in our day,

only still more wonderful and brilliant from the contest being between a little David and a great Goliath, might very probably have taken place after the gain of this one battle; but that does not contradict the assertion above maintained, for it only refers to what the King originally looked forward to from his offensive. The surrounding and taking prisoners the enemy's Army was an event which was beyond all calculation, and which the King never thought of, at least not until the Austrians laid themselves open to it by the unskilful position in which they placed themselves at Prague.

[*]This chapter was probably written in 1828, since which time the numerical relations have considerably changed.—A. d. H.

[*]That is, recruited them in France itself. In the Grand Army, 1812, only one-third of the units were in fact French; the remainder came from the countries Napoleon had occupied.

[*]Curiously in 1866 the Prussians marched nearly twice as fast as the Austrians, in 1870 nearly three times faster day for day as the French. This superior mobility in both instances conditioned their success. The French had forgotten the secret of marching. The Prussians had learnt it.—Editor.

[*]The field telegraph and signalling have of course, modified all this.

[*]The modern quick-fiiring battery of four guns can deliver easily 8000 bullets a minute, and occupies forty yards of front, a battalion of 800 men in line takes roughly 400 yards, and can deliver about the same number of bullets.

[*]To bring these ideas up to date, all that is necessary is to multiply the number of guns and distances by ten—in the form of the battle—there is no material change. Modern cavalry can cover ten times the distance at speed as when Clausewitz wrote.—Editor.

[*]Modern practice has altered this. Nothing serves better to hamper unity of command in attacking troops than small woods, whose exits are under close fire from the defender's position.—Editor.

[*]This was the British practice in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, At Ligny the Prussians stood on the enemy's side of the hill. Wellington, seeing this from Bry, said, "Old Blücher will get most damnably mauled."—Editor.

[*]This no longer holds good. At St. Privat the Prussians attacking across the open carried the position, at Gravelotte the ground being intersected they failed completely. Unity of command is more essential than cover from fire.—Editor.

[*]Clausewitz might have added Cromwell, who certainly had had no previous military education, yet even German critics admit that both as a tactician and strategist he was two centuries ahead of his time.—Editor.

[*]To serve as an elucidation of chap. v. of Book V.

[*]The command is the true base of division. If a Field-Marshal commands 100,000 men, of which 50,000 are under the orders of a General specially designated, whilst the Field-Marshal in person conducts the other 50,000, formed in five Divisions, a case which often happens, the whole is not in reality divided in two parts, but into six, only that one of them is five times as large as the others.

[*]See chap. xii. Book III.—Tr.

[*]This passage should read thus: If "*out of a body of* 1000 *men,* 500 *have been placed in reserve, and the remaining* 500 *men,*" &c.—Editor.

[*]Done hand over head.—Trans.

[*]This again shows that Clausewitz had not grasped the spirit of Napoleon's conduct of the battle. His express object was, to limit these unpredictable contingencies by compelling his adversary to expend his reserves prematurely.—Editor.

[*]Note the result of increased range of armament—the range being 1500 yards, eighty battalions could converge their fire on the single one, similarly for artillery. The principle remains unaltered, only its scope is intensified.—Editor.

[*]Apply the above reasoning to the Boer War, 1900. We were trying to establish the point where this equilibrium set in by experiment. Had we known what we were really trying to discover, we should have found it sooner and at less cost.—Editor.

[*]Yet even in 1870, Batteries were frequently crowded out of line. Nowadays they will often only find room by deployment one behind the other.—Editor.

[*]It is clear from all the above that Clausewitz had never contemplated the possibility of a whole Army possessing a great superiority (two- or three-fold) in mobility over its adversary. Neither has the idea come home as yet to any modern writer on tactics. This indicates the direction our reformers should take. A twofold superiority in tactical mobility would upset every tactical prescription in existence, precisely as our methods were upset by Boer mobility in South Africa.

[*]The enormous increase in range, especially of artillery, has altered this relation materially. Roughly the Attack has gained as the square of the ranges. The Defence has gained only as the range.—Editor.