

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

LXVth YEAR.]

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2, 1809.

[No. 3264.]

Miscellany.

From the Edinburgh Review.

de la Conscription, ou Recueil Chronologique des Lois et des Arrêtes du Gouvernement, des Décrets Impériaux relatives à la levée des Conscrits, à leur remplacement, à leurs dispenses de service, &c. depuis l'an I. jusques et compris l'an XIV. Avec Tables, &c. 8vo. pp. 270. Paris, 1806.

(Concluded from our last.)

There be one principle of military discipline sanctioned by the universal experience of mankind, it is, that soldiers should be kept in a state of unremitting activity. No great commander has ever appeared, with whom this was not a leading maxim; and it may be taken as an axiom, that no conquering army ever issued from the walls of an idle garrison, or the alleys of a populous city. In attending to the general analogy of our conflicts, we must be at once sensible, that the soldier, when at a distance from the theatre of war, is not inured to extreme labour, and the officer whose eye is not habitually fixed in contemplating the image of his profession, in somewhat of its native proportion, can never be well prepared for the duties of a campaign. The science of command, the mechanism of subordination, are not acquired by the mere manual training of the evolutions of small bodies of men, but must be studied on a large scale—in great numbers and general movements. All the commentators on the tactics of the ancients, are struck with the importance which they attach to these objects; and represent the fatigues of their military even in an interval of peace, as odious of human endurance. Augustus, Trajan, and Trajan, employed the 170,000 that constituted the peace establishment of their empire, in public works; and it is their labours that we may trace the great roads, bridges and causeways, of which such magnificent vestiges are still extant in the western parts of Europe. We need not extend upon the chances of success for a general who wages war with an army to which there is truly no other difference between the field of battle and the field of parade, than the effusion of blood.

There is no part of the Roman policy which the French have more studiously copied, than their attention to military discipline. It is their intention, as they express it, to form a generation propre à la guerre et à la gloire—"Un peuple guerrier porté à la guerre par ses lois," &c. And for this purpose the boys of all the lycées of the empire are made to march to their classes by the sound of the drum, and are taught their military exercises during their hours of recreation. The exercises of the conscripts, after their removal to the depots, are incessant, and of a nature to qualify them for the severest hardships. A moment of rest is allowed in the short interval between their incorporation and their march to the frontiers or to the enemy. The conscripts retained in France, which always consist of raw recruits, are collected in numerous battalions, and disciplined without intermission, in a scale large enough to familiarise them to the tumult of general action, and to the use of the military coup d'œil. The camp of Boulogne is intended for this purpose, and should rather be imitated as a nursery for soldiers, than dreaded as an assembly of invaders. Fatigue, and the penalties of misconduct, make a dreadful havoc among the conscripts, whose youth and condition render them peculiarly delicate of frame and habits. The waste of life, however, is not one of the evils of imperial solicitude. An unlimited enrolment over the population of the country enables them to replace every deficiency, and survivors are poured into the field with the same moulded into strength, and amidst completely broken to the yoke. Thus it was that, with the aid of this probation, and of discipline, and of confidence in their commanders, the French troops supported a generation devoted to war and to glory—the people carried on to glory by their laws.

Were I to raise a new army, says Machiavel, I should choose them between 17 and 40;—to retain an old one, I would always have them of 17. (de la Guerre, liv. i. chap. vi.)

We have received a particular account of the one and incessant exercises of a body of 20,000 conscripts at Meudon, in August, 1806, under the pretext of rewarding their exploits in the field with a great festival at Paris. This was not as a mark to their leaders' designs upon them, which were then irrevocably determined. The festival was ever celebrated; but the troops exercised for six hours a day in a deep meadow, Buonaparte himself directing their exercises the whole time; and sometimes under the influence of almost incessant rain and tempest.

ed the privations and severities of the winter campaign of Poland, better than their adversaries, who fought under every natural advantage.

The fear of punishment, the dread of shame, and the hope of reward, are all made to operate in their system with the strongest effect. Blows, which tend to weaken the sense of personal dignity, are never given; but, when the resources of reproach and disgrace prove insufficient, recourse is had to the utmost rigours of solitary imprisonment, and to the penalties we have detailed in a former part of this article. They know the full value, too, of that esprit de corps, which has so often changed poltroons into heroes; and employ every art to excite and maintain it, by minute divisions and invidious oppositions, employed particularly during the operations of a campaign. It requires little more than one or two years to make veterans of men thus fashioned and conducted; who, according to the bent of their genius, are precipitated in every movement, and led on impetuously to every attack; and whose murmurs, if time were given for the intrusion of discontent, would be lost in the tumult of incessant agitation. By the dispersion of the new conscripts, as we have seen, individually, among their veteran predecessors of a few campaigns, disaffection evaporates without danger to the government; and the former are gradually assimilated to their companions. Once without the sphere of their domestic attractions, with no hope of escape, they accommodate themselves to circumstances with the facility which belongs to a temperance pre-eminently flexible and ardent. They are kept as much as possible beyond the frontiers, not merely for the purposes of conquest and rapine, but in order that they may the sooner lose the qualities of the citizen, and become altogether the creatures of the general. With a view to render this conversion more perfect, and more secure for the government, the principal leaders are frequently transferred from one corps to another, in order that no dangerous attachment to individuals may arise from a long continuance in the same command. If their service has its extraordinary hardships, it has also its peculiar rewards. Their prototypes of antiquity never more successfully reconciled the restraints of discipline and the license of pillage. Death is inexorably inflicted, as we have seen announced in their bulletins, for the slightest transgressions, when it is deemed expedient to enforce order; but we need not be told, that signal for riot is often given by the general, and the abstinence of the soldier fully required. After twenty years, he becomes of right a member of the legion of honour; and as such is entitled to a small pension for life. This long term, however, is anticipated in numerous instances. Individuals who signalize themselves are promoted on the field of battle, or singled from the ranks with the most encouraging solemnities; and sometimes, for very obvious reasons, invested with the insignia of the order, and dismissed to their homes with the booty they may have acquired.

By a law of the directory, no persons (with the exception of engineers) could become officers, who had not served three years in a subordinate capacity. The revolution naturally opened the way to merit; and, seconded by this admirable policy, has filled all the posts of their army with men who unite in themselves the qualities of the soldier with the excellences that qualify for command. It is not hazardous too much to assert, that nine tenths of the present French officers have sprung from the ranks. Educated in distant camps, they know no other country; and, habituated by long devotion to the trade of war, it has become their element and their passion. Their whole fortune is staked on the sword; and their attachment is therefore necessarily secured, under the auspicious influence of a leader, whose indefatigable ambition occupies them in their favourite pursuits, and whose liberal impartiality feeds the hope of preferment, and divides the fruits of conquest. To their credit and example is due much of that spirit, which, notwithstanding the causes of alienation heretofore detailed, seems to animate the whole frame of the army; and no small share of that portentous success which has attended the course of the French arms. Of the eighteen marechaux d'empire, fourteen have either emerged from ranks, or ascended from the lowest employments.† Most of the generals of division,

* Machiavel [Art. de la Guer.] attributes all the civil wars and conspiracies of the Roman empire, after the time of Julius Cæsar, to the maintenance of the generals in the same command.

† Beaulieu, originally a common soldier, became in 1796 a captain of infantry in the army of Italy.—Brune, a printer at the commencement of the revolution, a member of the Club of Cordeliers,

and others who hold the principal commands, have the same origin, and sufficiently prove that war is an experimental science, and that military renown is not the prerogative of birth, but the harvest of toil, or the bounty of fortune.

These men, whose duties have almost wholly estranged them from the refinements and indulgencies of polished intercourse, retain all the leading features of their original department in life; a fierce and turbulent nature; a wild, irregular ambition; a total ignorance of the utility of civil laws, and a sovereign contempt for letters. As they partake largely of the prey, they zealously co-operate in the views of him, whom necessity or chance has led them to acknowledge as a master; but, should he be prematurely removed from the scene, we are not inclined to suppose, that his posthumous aims will be accomplished with equal fidelity. If it be true, as has been remarked, that military governments are at all times hostile to regular, monarchical succession, we can scarcely conceive the possibility of a quiet transmission of power in France, under her present circumstances. The military, of every description, are also said to be very unfit guardians for a legal constitution; and this observation is particularly applicable to the imperial generals, in whose minds no idea of subordination to civil authority, or of uncontested descent in the reigning family, could ever have taken root. The same daring enterprise which has borne them forward to their present elevation would not suffer them to remain inactive, if supreme command were placed within their reach. They would tear the sceptre from a feeble hand, and dispute the prize with the same ferocious violence, and desperate resolution, with which they are now grasping at the dominion and the treasures of the rest of the world.

During their contentions, the continent might indeed be allowed to respire; but, independent of the established maxim, that a conquering nation must always be miserable, we confess that we can see no prospect of melioration for France herself. The establishment of freedom in that country must be viewed, we think, as hopeless; nor can it be denied, that the great bulk of the people, while they are incapable of the temperate enjoyment, are decidedly averse to the form of a popular government. Some expectation may be excited by the external frame of the electoral colleges and deliberative assemblies; but this is completely checked by an examination of their actual condition. They have no basis of ancient opinion to command respect; no reputation of consistency to inspire confidence; and have not, indeed, in the view of any branch of the community, an existence or a will distinct from that of the throne to which they are appended. Under the shadow of a constitution still preserved, their election can never take place, unless ratified by the emperor; and is universally understood to depend, in practice, altogether on his nomination. The princes of the blood, and the great dignitaries of the state, are officially members of the senate; and to this body, the generals of division, detached from the foreign service, are regularly associated so as to give them almost a numerical preponderance.* The civil functionaries of every class

and an intimate friend of Danton, commenced his military career in 1793.—Augereau, a private in the Neapolitan service in 1787, became soon after a fencing master at Naples; in 1792 entered as a volunteer in the army of Italy; and in 1794 was a general of brigade in the army of the Pyrenees.—Bernadotte, at the commencement of the revolution, a sergeant in the regiment of royal marine; in 1794 a general of division.—Jourdan enlisted in 1778, but left the service in 1784; was a shopkeeper at the commencement of the revolution.—Kellerman began his career as a simple hussar in the regiment of Conflans.—Lacæe, originally a common soldier, became, in 1795, adjutant of division in the national guard of Paris.—Massena, a subaltern in the Sardinian service at the beginning of the revolution, in 1793 became a general of brigade.—Mortier, a captain of a volunteer company in his native province at the same period.—Ney, a Hussar, an adjutant general in 1796, after passing through all the inferior grades.—Lefebvre, son of a miller of Alsace, became a sergeant in the regiment of French guards before the revolution.—Perignon, after acting as a justice of peace at Montesch, engaged in the army, and passed rapidly through all the subordinate grades, and, in 1794, commanded the army of the eastern Pyrenees.—Soult was a subaltern before the revolution, in a regiment of infantry, and an adjutant general in 1795.—Murat served originally in the constitutional guard of Louis XVI; became afterwards an officer in the 12th regiment of chasseurs à cheval, &c.—Fumet began his career in 1792, as a grenadier in one of the volunteer battalions commanded by general Pille; and, in 1796, was one of the aids-de-camp of Buonaparte.

* The meetings of the senate are always private. Strangers may be admitted to those of the legislative body. The latter was not once assembled during the whole of the last campaign, in the north, the members not being perfectly sure. By the constitution, the judges were chosen for life; but, by a venatus consultum of the 12th October, 1807, it was

have not only dishonoured the republican character, by a shameful apostacy, but prostituted the dignity of human nature itself, by assuming the trade of spies and informers. In their discourses and writings, they inculcate the speculative doctrine of oppression, with as much zeal as their oppressors propagate, by conquest, its practical horrors. The meretricious wantonness of despotism could never exact, nor could the most inordinate vanity relish, a strain of adulation which would disgrace the worst periods of Roman degeneracy. We may fairly conclude, that the tyrant, who is known to require this tribute on all occasions, has in view, not only to complete his savage triumph over the patriotism of France, but to bring the cause of freedom itself into general contempt, by exhibiting the base servility of those who so lately undertook to vindicate the liberties of mankind.* There are, no doubt, as we have before affirmed, numbers who still cherish a preference for republican institutions; many who officiously promote the measures, in order to heighten the odium of the government; and a few who submit, with evident repugnance, to lend their personal weight to the consolidation of the new system. The first, however, will make no sacrifices of interest to principle; and the last can have little influence, when opposed to a majority, who have fortified their native dispositions by the habit of obsequiousness. The fabric of a free state can never be reared by such hands, nor framed from such materials, as the populace of Paris, or the soldiery of the frontiers. Should the imperial seat be vacated within a short period of time, the legislative assemblies might, like the Roman senate, in their contest with Maximin, maintain a struggle with some firmness and vigour, but with no permanent means, and scarcely with the benefit of obtaining a choice of masters.

When we meditate upon the probable career of an army of 700,000 men,† greater than any which Rome ever maintained in the meridian of her power, and imbued with such moral and physical energies, our apprehensions for France vanish before the melancholy forebodings we are compelled to entertain for the nations of the continent. A nation of soldiers must be occupied. Plunder is their food, and will be sought wherever it is to be found. A people at war from principle, says Montesquieu, must necessarily triumph, or be ruined. They will labour in their vocation, and never make peace but as conquerors. Such a temperament as we have ascribed to the chiefs and instruments of this conspiracy against mankind, is essentially at war with all the moral virtues and generous principles of our nature, with the gentle charities, as well as with the hoarded treasures of peace.

enacted, that they should thereafter undergo a probation of five years, and be then continued or dismissed at the option of the emperor. A commission was also created for the purpose of instituting an inquiry into the conduct of the judges in being, in order that the emperor might remove such as were pronounced unfit for their stations. In all political cases, and all cases of alleged fraud and evasion, the trial by jury has been suppressed by special tribunals; one of which is now established in each department, consisting of three judges appointed by the emperor.

* This feeling has been displayed strikingly in the bulletins from Spain, on the subject of the leading patriots of that country.

† Infantry of the line, 341,412; light infantry, 100,130; cavalry, 77,488; artillery, 46,489; engineers, 5,445; a total of five hundred and fifty thousand nine hundred and sixty-four. This is the official statement of 1805. Since that period, there has been an augmentation of at least one hundred thousand, exclusive of the foreign troops, Italian, Bavarian, &c. taken into the service. Gibbon remarks, that in his time, France still felt the efforts which she had made in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth! According to Neckar's estimate, the expenses of the war department, before the revolution, were 124,650,000 francs. In 1805, they were stated at 271,500,000 francs. M. de Lomeller estimated the population of France at 25,065,883, in 1780. Peuchet now rates it at 34,976,313, exclusive of Tuscany. The ratio of this population to the territory, is 1,093 3/32 individuals to the square league; a condensation inferior to none but that of Holland. The annual levies, before the revolution, were stated at one sevenieth of the bachelors capable of bearing arms—estimated by M. de Pomeller at 600,000; but the actual proportion of the yearly levies, at a very low calculation, may be one sevenieth of the whole male population between 20 and 40. Peuchet estimates this body 7,612,690, for 1805; and allows that sixty thousand have been annually recruited since the commencement of the revolution; but the real number must be more than double. The directory called forth 200,000 at once in the year 1799.

APHORISMS.

IN order to know how a thing ought to be done, learn to do it yourself, and you will then never be without a servant.
Half the medicines will serve the community, where industry is the chief physician.