

THE EVENING NEWS.

Thursday, January 19, 1871.
(From the London Society.)
BARON VON MOLTKE.

Looking at the career of this great strategist through all the grim lessons of war, we may discern many elements of human interest, many facts of an instructive and elevating character. We see that the guiding principles of that career have been no love of popularity, or even high-toned ambition, but honor, self-denial, patriotism. We will first give briefly the leading facts of his career. Von Moltke was a poor man, and the son of a poor man, but he was a noble one to suppose, as has been sometimes said, that he was a native of Holstein. The estate of Samrow, near Plutitz, belonged to his father, Von Moltke, and he was educated in the Prussian military service, and was resolved on giving a thorough soldierly education to his children. The bias which he received from his father, Von Moltke, was transmitted to his children. He has two sons serving with the army, Count Blomberg has also two, of whom one has been dangerously wounded, and General Von Moltke has four, of whom one is a captain in the Prussian army, and the others are in the military service.

Von Moltke was born the 26th of October, 1800; the years of his age are always the years of the century. Soon after his birth his father bought land in Holstein, and there he passed his childhood and youth, acquiring among Danes those military tastes which he turned against them in the course of the war. When he was only twelve years old he was sent with an elder brother to the Land Cadet Academy at Copenhagen. When he was twenty-two he entered the Prussian military service, after a severe examination. He was the youngest second-lieutenant in the eighth regiment of foot-guards, then stationed at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder. The corps was commanded at the time by General Von Marwick, whose wife by birth a countess of Von Moltke. This circumstance was a fortunate event for the young second-lieutenant. And, indeed, he needed any adventitious help which he could obtain; for his worldly prospects, beyond his profession, were at the very lowest ebb. His parents' property was nearly all lost through the war, and a long series of misadventures. They were not able to allow him the slightest addition to his pay. Yet he was most anxious to learn modern languages, and to do this he had to save out of his scanty pay. Truly poverty is a hard taskmaster, but the lessons which the teachers are invaluable. He saved enough to enable him to learn modern languages, and has made himself a very remarkable linguist. He is a man of great facility, and it has been humorously said that he knows now to hold his tongue in eight languages.

From the military school at Berlin he passed to the direction of the school of what insubordinate School of Division. He discharged his duty so well that he was attached to a commission for topographical surveying in the Grand Duchy of Posen, under General Von Muffling. Every one loved and respected Von Muffling. Even in his admissions there was a vein of kind pleasant humor. One of Von Muffling's companions introduced into his plan an impossible mountain, and would not acknowledge his error, even when the General pointed it out. The General only observed, with a smile, "Well, then, I congratulate you on having enriched science, and provided the province with a new mountain." Soon after this he was promoted to the rank of Captain, and ordered to serve on the staff, on which, through the influence of General Von Krassneck, he received an appointment two years afterwards.

It has been asserted on high authority that Moltke has spent his life studying the art of war seated in an armchair before a table. "Von Moltke is the man who learned the art of swimming before going into the water; he is the conventional German mentally enclosing the abstract idea of a campaign, he is the doughty little bonnet-maker, he is the soldier's spy by backing at a wooden figure." In a word, he is a man of much practical exaggeration. He has profoundly studied the whole subject of strategy. So far as war is an art, it is an art of which he has made himself a master. But it is a mistake to say that he has been wholly absorbed in the study of war, and that his triumphs are the triumphs of a theorist. He saw whatever was to be won of war, but happily for the human race and for the Vaterland, there was very little war to be seen between 1815 and 1866. He had an opportunity, however, of seeing some foreign service, which to a mind so singularly thoughtful and observant must have been fertile in results. During the seven years that he was captain—his promotion on the staff was by no means rapid in those peaceful times—he passed no less than four years in Turkey. He took a journey through Roumelia under Sultan Mahmud, by whom he was commissioned to prepare plans of Varna, Schumla, Silistria and other places on the Danube. This led to his historical work, "The Russian-Turkish Expedition, 1828." Von Moltke has himself spoken of this work as *his*; but it has been pronounced by so competent a critic as Colonel Kennedy to be a thoughtful and scientific history. After this remarkable campaign, he was entrusted with the care of Prussian interests in Turkey. He was employed also, with the assistance of Von Muffling, Fischer, and Von Vinke-Ober, to organize the Turkish Army on the Prussian model. The five went to work vigorously, but with very disappointing results, which gave little promise of future success. At the battle of Nis, the entire Turkish army, which had been disciplined, organized, and powerfully recruited, dispersed, and in a few days' time the fleet deserted to the enemy. Von Moltke had, however, other duties to discharge. He traveled Asia Minor on horseback, to the extent of some four or five thousand English miles of travel, doing much to explore a province about the condition of which we have had no little exact knowledge in recent times. He did very much to amend the imperfect maps which then existed. He made a great number of sketches supplemental to his valuable drawings of the Danubian, the Bosphorus, and Constantinople. The great geographer, Ritter, has used these sketches, and has compared them with the accounts of Xenophon of the Great Campaign, with the travels of Marco Polo, and with the travels of the last Emperor of Persia, to have been the last Emperor's military observer since Xenophon who had examined the region. All other European explorers had been most monotonous in their accounts. The latter, however, with greater accuracy, precisely the same claim. Like Xenophon, he observed the mountain ranges of Ephraïm, like Xenophon and his men, he sailed down the river on inflated sheepskins. Like Xenophon and his men, when he first saw the blue sea after a weary journey, he broke out into the cry of "Thalatta! Thalatta!"

To be continued.

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