# Generalship

## Its Diseases and Their Cure

A Study of
The Personal Factor
in Command

by

Major-General
J. F. C. Fuller

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Military Service Publishing Co.
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## GENERALSHIP

'For what art can surpass that of the general?—an art which deals not with dead matter but with living beings, who are subject to every impression of the moment, such as fear, precipitation, exhaustion—in short, to every human passion and excitement. The general has not only to reckon with unknown quantities, such as time, weather, accidents of all kinds, but he has before him one who seeks to disturb and frustrate his plans and labours in every way; and at the same time this man, upon whom all eyes are directed, feels upon his mind the weight of responsibility not only for the lives and honour of hundreds of thousands, but even for the welfare and existence of his country.'

A. von Boguslawski

## PREFACE

IN the summer of 1921 I was lunching at the *Restaurant la Rue* with the Deputy Chief of the French General Staff when he told me the following story:

At the battle of Waterloo, Colonel Clement, an infantry commander, fought with the most conspicuous bravery; but unfortunately was shot through the head. Napoleon, hearing of his gallantry and misfortune, gave instructions for him to be carried into a farm where Larrey the surgeon-general was operating.

One glance convinced Larrey that his case was desperate, so taking up a saw he removed the top of his skull and placed his brains on the table.

Just as he had finished, in rushed an aide-de-camp, shouting: 'Is General Clement here?'

Clement, hearing him, sat up and exclaimed: 'No! but *Colonel* Clement is.'

'Oh, mon général,' cried the aide-de-camp, embracing him, 'the Emperor was overwhelmed when we heard of your

gallantry, and has promoted you on the field of battle to the rank of General.'

Clement rubbed his eyes, got off the table, clapped the top of his skull on his head and was about to leave the farm, when Larrey shouted after him: 'Mon général—your brains!' To which the gallant Frenchman, increasing his speed, shouted back: 'Now that I am a general I shall no longer require them!'

In this modest study my object is to prove, that though Clement was wrong about brains, without his courage there can be no true generalship.

J. F. C. F.

CONTENTS

# Generalship: Its Diseases and their Cure

## A Study of the Personal Factor in Command

'War with impersonal leadership is a brutal soul-destroying business, provocative only of class animosity and bad workmanship. Our senior officers must get back to sharing danger and sacrifice with their men, however exalted their rank, just as sailors have to do. That used to be the British way, but, unfortunately, there was a grievous lapse from it in the late war.'

### GENERALSHIP IN THE WORLD WAR

THE quotation which heads this study is taken from an interesting and very human book—*A Glance at Gallipoli,* by Lieut.-Colonel C. O. Head, D.S.O., from which, later on, I shall quote again. The suggestion contained in it is worth thinking over, especially so to-day, when our army is faced by uncommon difficulties, by radical changes, by reactionary and revolutionary influences, and by problems which if not solved correctly may spell disaster. The pressure of international politics is engendering the heat

of future wars: that of national insolvency—social disintegration and military decay; and above these the progress of industrialization is forcing mechanization to the fore, whilst Western civilization itself is daily becoming more unstable and emotional.

To-day, we soldiers are like men in a dark room groping blindly for the handle of the door, for the latch of the window. Nothing is seen clearly. We know that 'the war to end all wars' is a myth; that Europe is in turmoil and Asia in travail. We know that wars will come, as they always have come when these conditions prevailed, and yet we are asked to make bricks without straw and with precious little clay. So it happens that in the words of Isaiah: 'We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.'

It is because so many men are morally dead that the times are so gloomy, a spirit of defeatism is abroad, and like a mist it magnifies every difficulty. What the world of to-day is lacking in is cour-

age, the valour of leadership and the self-sacrifice of those in command. This, I think then, is the essence of the above quotation: Neither a nation nor an army is a mechanical contrivance, but a living thing, built of flesh and blood and not of iron and steel. Courage is its driving force; for, if human history be consulted, it will immediately be discovered that in the past all things worth while began their lives by some one man, or woman, daring to do what others feared to attempt. Fear has always ended in failure, and fear is not a personal emotion only, but also the product of a man's surroundings, the outcome of a system quite as much as the reaction of a danger.

To-day, in the army we are faced with the problems of motorization and of mechanization, just as the navy was seventy-odd years ago. Some think these changes good, and others bad; but their possible virtues and vices are insignificant problems if we lose sight of the greater problem which is this: *The more mechanical become the weapons with which we fight, the less mechanical must be the spirit which controls them.*

Sometime before the outbreak of the World War, quite unconsciously, so it seems to me, the art of soldiership slipped into a groove and became materialized. Not increasing weapon-power alone, but the same factors which in industry have led to a separation, and, consequently, to a loss of sympathy, between employer and employed, have also, quite unseen, been at work in all modern armies from the year 1870 onwards. It was, I think, ever increasing size, with its concomitant complexity of control, which more than any factors created this change both in industrial and military organizations. The more management, or command, became methodized, the more dehumanized each grew; the worker, or the soldier, becoming a cog in a vast soulless machine was de-spiritualized, the glamour of work, or of war, fading from before his eyes, until working, or fighting, became drudgery. Once, the soldier had seen those whom he obeyed, those who could order him to instant death; he had seen them standing beside him in the ranks, or not far in rear, facing death with him. He had watched

Wolfe dying on the Heights of Abraham, Moore at Corunna, and Wellington rallying his squares at Quatrebras and Waterloo. Then, as in the last war, he saw them no longer; now and again, perhaps, he heard of them far away, as managing directors sitting in dug-outs, in châteaux and in offices. Frequently, he did not know their names. To him they were no more than ghosts who could terrify but who seldom materialized; hence battles degenerated into subaltern-led conflicts, just as manufacturing had degenerated into foreman-controlled work. The glitter and glamour was gone, the personal factor was gone, the man was left without a master, without a true master—the general in flesh and blood, who could see, who could hear, who could watch, who could feel, who could swear and curse, praise and acclaim, and above all who risked his life with his men, and not merely issued orders mechanically from some well-hidden headquarters miles and miles to the rear.

Colonel Head speaks with force and understanding on this subject. Of Colonel Doughty Wylie, of Gallipoli fame,

he says: 'He was killed, and was rewarded posthumously with the Victoria Cross, and rightly so, because his action was exceptional; *but should not such an example of leadership, not in its success, but in its undertaking, be normal rather than exceptional?* It might be asked why he deserved the V.C. more than any of his men? His business was to lead; theirs to follow....This was our old practice—even in the storming sieges of the Peninsula War, the generals in charge of the operations fought their way into the fortresses with their troops. Departure from this practice had led to unduly prolonged spasms of futile fighting, to great and unnecessary waste of precious life, and to a separation in spirit and sympathy of the generals and staff from the rest of the army. A sense of equality of sacrifices is an essential cement in a fighting force.'[1]

In France, as in Gallipoli, and from all accounts in every theatre of the World War, a blight fell upon generalship.

Colonel Head quotes as an example the

[1] *A Glance at Gallipoli*, Lieut.-Colonel C. O. Head, p. 87 (1931). The italics are mine.

landing at Suvla Bay. The general-in-chief having issued his plans, 'No obligation rested on him to superintend the work of his subordinates, apportion the tasks requiring discharge to those who had proved their special capacity for them, or to see that his plans were executed in accordance with his design and intention! No, his part was done; now he had only to wait in dignified seclusion on the island of Imbros for news of the result of his complicated plans and orders! Shades of Wellington, Wolseley and Roberts, how, looking down from the Olympian heights, they must have wished they could interpose to exert their authority and illume the situation with the free spirit of war!'[1]

Paschendaele was much the same, and though no one in his senses would have expected the general-in-chief, or his subordinate army commanders, to lead their men over those desolate shell-blasted swamps, very little was done outside formulating a plan to fight an *offensive* battle in a most difficult *defensive* area, with the result that soon after this battle

[1] *Ibid.* p. 144.

was launched, on July 31st, 1917, all contact between the half-drowned front and the wholly dry rear was lost. This hideous turmoil will go down to history as the most soulless battle fought in the annals of the British Army.

Worse was to come from the point of view of generalship. The army having been bled white and gutted at Ypres was, in March, the following year, thrown back in confusion by the Germans, and what do we see? Directly the British front is broken, the generals and their staffs pack up. As the enemy advances there is much buzzing on the telephone wires; then the army headquarters go back so many miles, corps headquarters so many, divisional headquarters so many, and so on, day after day, dragging the front back with them, the tail of which is covered by weary rearguards of subalterns and private soldiers. What says the shade of Marshal Ney to this—I wonder?

Is this an exaggeration? Well, I for one watched it, and it was the sorry picture which I saw: an army sliding backwards downhill, because, with one excep-

tion only, so I believe, no one of the higher commanders thought—it was no question of daring, for these men were not cowards—of rushing forward and kicking a moral stone under the backward skidding wheels. The exception I witnessed myself, a divisional commander in the picket line with his men and everyone confident and smiling. He was doing nothing outside showing himself, yet his presence acted like a charm—it maintained confidence. He was a man who knew the value of moral cement.

It is indeed pleasant in the drab dullness of this war to look back on an incident such as this. It is even encouraging to learn that whilst the British commander-in-chief[1] lay still in Imbros, 'At the first Anzac landing, Mustapha Kemal, the Turkish commander, rushed ahead of the main body of his troops up the slopes of Sari Bair to see for himself the extent and direction of his enemy's move from the landing place,' and that 'At the Anzac

[1] The British Commander-in-Chief at Gallipoli was not at Imbros at the time of the first Anzac landing, but on board *Queen Elizabeth*, whose big guns were supporting the landing.

August attack, the German General Kannengiesser, commanding the section similarly rushed up Chanuk Bair ahead of the reserve troops. He got a bullet from a Gurkha machine-gun through his shoulder, but was able to allot the required positions to his troops before he was carried away. And Liman von Sanders himself, the C.-in-C., on the same day dashed forward to the Anafarta Ridge, and posted there, personally, the few troops he had available for defence."[1] It is pleasant to record these actions, in spite of the fact that they are to the credit of our enemy, not only because gallantry is the common heritage of soldiers, but because they show that generalship was not quite dead.

In the War, I know only of one corps in which in spirit generalship and system of staff work antedated the 1870 epoch, and that was the British Tank Corps; a corps commanded and staffed by young men, for on the headquarter staff the oldest was under forty. No other corps, so far as I am aware, ever experienced the pride of being led into battle by its gen-

[1] *Ibid.* p. 146.

eral, as Major-General Elles led the van of his tanks at the battle of Cambrai. No other corps, and of this I am certain, so persistently sent its general staff officers to the front when battle was engaged. At Arras, at Ypres, at Cambrai and at Amiens, they went forward to the battle-field, and some not far from the leading tanks. During the earlier part of our disastrous defeat in March, 1918, *all* went forward, and many of the administrative staff as well. In this particular battle, the Second Battle of the Somme, I was convinced by personal observation on the spot, that had other corps acted as the Tank Corps acted, that is to say had their generals and their staffs gone forwards in place of backwards, the enemy could have been halted on the Somme in place of being allowed to approach to within cannon-shot of Amiens. One thing is, however, certain, and much of this fighting in France proved it over and over again, namely, that the most rapid way to shell-shock an army is to shell-proof its generals; for once the heart of an army is severed from its head the result is paralysis. The modern system of com-

mand has in fact guillotined generalship, hence modern battles have degenerated into saurian writhings between headless monsters.

## THE ESSENTIALS IN GENERALSHIP

'THE moral is to the physical as three to one,' is a catch phrase which parrot-wise has been repeated a million times, and yet few soldiers pay any attention to what morality in war really means. Above all things it means heroism, for heroism is the soul of leadership, whether a man is leading himself by placing his convictions before his interests, or whether he is risking his life to save the lives of his comrades, or to help win the cause his country is fighting for. Both forms are essential in generalship, for until a man learns how to command himself it is unlikely that his command over others will prove a profitable business.

War is, or anyhow should be, an heroic undertaking; for without heroism it can be no more than an animal conflict, which in place of raising man through an ideal, debases him through brutality.

Many years ago now this was pointed out by John Ruskin in his lecture on *War* which he gave at the Royal Military

Academy, Woolwich, in 1865,[1] the year the Civil War in America ended. I intend to quote freely from this lecture, probably the most noted ever delivered at the Royal Academy, and certainly one which we should study to-day. I intend to do so, because Ruskin gets down to the heart of this subject, showing that if war is bereft of the personal factor in command, it cannot but degenerate into a soulless conflict in which the worst and not the best in man will emerge.

An artist and a lover of peace, he said to his youthful audience:

'You may imagine that your work is wholly foreign to, and separate from mine. So far from that, all the pure and noble arts of peace are founded on war; no great art ever yet rose on earth, but among a nation of soldiers. There is no art among a shepherd people, if it remains at peace. There is no art among an agricultural people, if it remains at peace. Commerce is barely consistent with fine art; but cannot produce it. Manufacture not only is unable to pro-

[1] *The Crown of Wild Olives*, John Ruskin, 1900 edition.

duce it, but invariably destroys whatever seeds of it exist. There is no great art possible to a nation but that which is based on battle.'

To Ruskin war 'is the foundation of all the arts,' because 'it is the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties of men'; then he says:

'It is very strange to me to discover this; and very dreadful—but I saw it to be quite an undeniable fact. The common notion that peace and the virtues of civil life flourished together, I found to be wholly untenable. Peace and the *vices* of civil life only flourish together. We talk of peace and learning, and of peace and plenty, and of peace and civilization; but I found that those were not the words which the Muse of History coupled together: that, on her lips, the words were —peace, and sensuality—peace, and selfishness—peace, and death. I found, in brief, that all great nations learned the truth of word, and strength of thought, in war; that they were nourished in war, and wasted by peace; taught by war, and deceived by peace; trained by war, and

betrayed by peace; in a word, that they were born in war, and expired in peace.'

But what type of war does Ruskin refer to? Not 'the rage of a barbarian wolf-flock', not wars begotten by bankers, squabbling merchants or jealous politicians, but wars of self-defence. 'To such war as this', he says, 'all men are born; in such war as this any man may happily die; and out of such war as this have arisen throughout the extent of past ages, all the highest sanctities and virtues of humanity.' Then turning towards his audience he said:

'If you, the gentlemen of this or any other kingdom, chose to make your pastime of contest, do so, and welcome; but set not up . . . unhappy peasant pieces upon the chequer of forest and field. If the wager is to be of death, lay it on your own heads, not theirs. A goodly struggle in the Olympic dust, though it be the dust of the grave, the gods will look upon, and be with you in; but they will not be with you, if you sit on the sides of the amphitheatre, whose steps are the mountains of earth, whose arena its valleys, to urge

your peasant millions into gladiatorial war.'

And further on:

'First, the great justification of this game is that it truly, when well played, determines *who is the best man*—who is the highest bred, the most self-denying, the most fearless, the coolest of nerve, the swiftest of eye and hand. You cannot test their qualities wholly, unless there is a clear possibility of the struggle's ending in death. It is only in the fronting of that condition that the full trial of the man, soul and body, comes out. You may go to your game of wickets, or of hurdles, or of cards, and any knavery that is in you may stay unchallenged all the while. But if the play may be ended at any moment by a lance thrust, a man will probably make up his accounts a little before he enters it. Whatever is rotten and evil in him will weaken his hand more in holding a sword-hilt than in balancing a billiard cue; and on the whole, the habit of living lightly hearted, in daily pr
death, always has had, and n

power both in the making and testing of honest men.'

These two quotations contain within them the essence of true generalship. The true general is not a mere prompter in the wings of the stage of war, but a participant in its mighty drama, the value of whose art cannot be tested 'unless there is a clear possibility of the struggle ending in death'. If he will not, or if the system of command prohibits him from experiencing this danger, though he may feel for his men, his men cannot possibly feel for him as they would were he sharing danger with them. Morally the battle will be thrown out of tune, because Death is the bandmaster of War, and unless all, general to drummer boy, follow the beat of his baton, harmony must eventually give way to discord. On the modern battlefield Death beats one tune to the soldier, and frequently the modern general, out of sight of his baton, beats another. No single one of the great warriors of past ages has dared to be so presumptuous.

Courage is the pivotal moral virtue in

the system of war expounded by Clausewitz. He writes: 'Primarily the element in which the operations of war are carried on is danger; but which of all the moral qualities is the first in danger? *Courage.*'[1] And again: 'War is the province of danger, and therefore courage above all things is the first quality of a warrior.'[2] And yet again: 'As danger is the general element in which everything moves in war, it is also chiefly by courage, the feeling of one's own power, that the judgment is differently influenced. It is to a certain extent the crystalline lens through which all appearances pass before reaching the understanding."[3]

Should the general consistently live outside the realm of danger, then, though he may show high moral courage in making decisions, by his never being called upon to breathe the atmosphere of danger his men are breathing, this lens will become blurred, and he will seldom experience the moral influences his men are

[1] *On War*, Karl von Clausewitz, English edition, vol. I. p. 20 (1908).
[2] *Ibid.* vol. I. p. 47.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. I. p. 101.

experiencing. But it is the influence of his courage upon the hearts of his men in which the main deficit will exist. It is his personality which will suffer—his prestige.

'The personality of the general is indispensable,' said Napoleon; 'he is the head, he is the all, of an army. The Gauls were not conquered by the Roman legions, but by Cæsar. It was not before the Carthaginian soldiers that Rome was made to tremble, but before Hannibal. It was not the Macedonian phalanx which penetrated to India, but Alexander. It was not the French Army which reached the Weser and the Inn, it was Turenne. Prussia was not defended for seven years against the three most formidable European Powers by the Prussian soldiers, but by Frederick the Great.'[1] In a similar strain Robert Jackson writes: 'Of the conquerors and eminent military characters who have at different times astonished the world, Alexander the Great and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden are two of the most singular; the latter of whom

[1] *Memoirs écrits à Sainte-Helène*, Montholon, vol. II, p. 90 (1847).

was the most heroic and most extraordinary man of whom history has left any record. An army which had Alexander or Charles in its eye was different from itself in its simple nature, it imbibed a share of their spirit, became insensible of danger, and heroic in the extreme."[1]

So we see that without the personal contact of the commander with his men, whether of a subordinate general or of the general-in-chief, such enthusiasm cannot be roused and such heroism cannot be created, for as Thomas Carlyle says: heroism is 'the divine relation . . . which in all times unites a Great Man to other men.'

There are yet other factors besides those which appertain to the heart. Marshal Saxe realizes this when he says: Though 'the first quality a general should possess is courage, without which all others are of little value; the second is brains, and the third good health."[2] 'He must be as active in mind as in body,"[3]

[1] *A Systematic View of the Formation, Discipline and Economy of Armies*, Robert Jackson, pp. 218-219 (1804).

[2] *Mes Réveries*, Marshal Saxe (1757).

[3] *Œuvres Militaires*, Prince de Ligne (1806).

says the Prince de Ligne. Mind and body, let us see what the great soldiers have said about these.

Baron von der Goltz writes: 'One of the most important talents of a general we would call that of a "creative mind"; because to term it "inventive faculty" appears to us too shallow.' Originality, not conventionality, is one of the main pillars of generalship. To do something that the enemy does not expect, is not prepared for, something which will surprise him and disarm him morally. To be always thinking ahead and to be always peeping round corners. To spy out the soul of one's adversary, and to act in a manner which will astonish and bewilder him, this is generalship. To render the enemy's general ridiculous in the eyes of his men, this is the foundation of success. And what is the dryrot of generalship? The Archduke Albert puts his finger on it when he says:

'There are plenty of small-minded men who, in time of peace, excel in detail, are inexorable in matters of equipment and drill, and perpetually interfere with the work of their subordinates.

'They thus acquire an unmerited reputation, and render the service a burden, but they above all do mischief in preventing development of individuality, and in retarding the advancement of independent and capable spirits.

'When war arises the small minds, worn out by attention to trifles, are incapable of effort, and fail miserably. So goes the world."[1]

Frederick the Great, as may be expected, is more sarcastic. Before a gathering of generals he said:

'The great mistake in inspections is that you officers amuse yourselves with God knows what buffooneries and never dream in the least of serious service. This is a source of stupidity which would become most dangerous in case of a serious conflict. Take shoemakers and tailors and make generals of them and they will not commit worse follies!"[2]

What does this meticulous-mindedness

[1] *Les Méthodes de la Guerre*, Pierron (1889-1895).

[2] Quoted from *Battle Studies*, Ardant de picq, American Edition, p. 10 (1921).

lead to? Marshal Saxe gives us the answer, saying:

'Many Generals in the day of battle busy themselves in regulating the marching of their troops, in hurrying aides-de-camp to and fro, in galloping about incessantly. They wish to do everything, and as a result do nothing.

'If he wishes to be a sergeant-major and be everywhere, he acts like the fly in the fable who thought that it was he who made the coach move.

'How does this happen? It is because few men understand war in its larger aspects. Their past life has been occupied in drilling troops, and they are apt to believe that this alone constitutes the art of war.'[1]

Finally we come to the third factor, physical fitness, a factor which can more easily be cultivated and controlled, for whilst, should he lack them, it is impossible to endow a general with courage and intelligence, it is possible to pick fit men and young men who are likely to remain fit for command. Baron von der

[1] *Mes Rêveries*, Marshal Saxe (1757).

Goltz says: 'Good health and a robust constitution are invaluable to a general. . . . In a sick body, the mind cannot possibly remain permanently fresh and clear. It is stunted by the selfish body from the great things to which it should be entirely devoted.'[1]

These, then, are the three pillars of generalship—courage, creative intelligence and physical fitness; the attributes of youth rather than of middle age.

[1] *The Nation in Arms*, Colmar von der Goltz, English Edition, p. 75 (1906).

## EXAMPLES OF THE PERSONAL FACTOR

IN this study of generalship I will now turn from theory to history, and will show that though most of the theory I have quoted is drawn from that epoch of war which preceded the industrialization of military power, that is the change-over from the simple hand-made weapons still used during the Napoleonic Wars to the more complex and powerful weapons which followed the introduction of steam power, it is in no way incompatible with the needs of the present age. This theory is absolutely sound for all types of war, whether shock or missile weapons predominate, or whether missile weapons are of short or long range, are slow to fire or rapid to load.

To prove this, which is simultaneously to disprove the quite modern impersonal theory of command, I will first select a few examples of leadership taken from British history, in order to show that with us moral leadership was once a marked characteristic of our generalship. Next, I will turn to the American Civil

War, the last of the great conflicts to be waged before impersonal command was reduced to a science.

Though this war may seem remote when compared to the World War, it was a war full of extraordinary and novel dangers. The Minié rifle then used was as superior to the old flintlock musket of Napoleonic times as the magazine rifle of the last decade of the nineteenth century was superior to it; yet as we shall see the dangers it created in no way compelled the American generals, most of whom were of Anglo-Saxon blood, to emulate that Gilbertian hero, the Duke of Plaza-Toro, who led his army from behind!

In the good old days of the mid-nineteenth century, though our fox-hunting generals may not have been too intelligent, and were in most cases totally ignorant of the art of war, no one would dream of suggesting that they were lacking in courage. In spite of weapon improvement the courage of our senior officers was as it had been in the days of Wellington and before. In 1793, in the assault of the 14th Foot on the fortified

camp of Famars in Flanders, 'The French attack was so fierce that the regiment wavered for a minute, when Colonel Doyle, dashing to the front, shouted in a loud voice, "Come along my lads, let's break these scoundrels to their own d——d tune; drummers, strike up 'Ca ira'." [1] What was the result? The French were swept over the ridge!

In November, 1854, we see the same thing. When at Inkerman the great Russian trunk column advanced up the Home Ridge, what did Colonel Daubeney do? Placing himself at the head of thirty men of the 55th Regiment, he charged his massed enemy and cut his way right through him.

Like Doyle, Daubeney was only a Colonel, but what of the British Commander-in-Chief, where was he? At the very moment that Daubeney charged, 'exposed to the full blast of' the Russian 'fire stood Raglan and his staff. ... Through all this Raglan sat perfectly unperturbed." [2]

[1] *A Hundred Years of Conflict*, Colonel Arthur Doyle, p. 54 (1911).

[2] *A History of the British Army*, Hon. J. W. Fortescue, vol. xiii, p. 129 (1930).

In our next war, again look at our Commander-in-Chief, this time at the battle of Cawnpore on December 6th, 1857: 'Sir Colin, a fine old soldier as he was, riding in front with his helmet off, cheering on his panting troops'. Then look at him in bivouac: 'I could not help admiring the toughness of old Sir Colin, who rolled himself up in a blanket, lay down, to sleep in a hole in a field, and seemed to enjoy it."[1]

Lastly step forward over forty years, to within fifteen years of the World War. At Magersfontein, where did General Wauchope fall? He fell with his orderly officer and the officer commanding the leading battalion 150 yards from the Boer trenches.

It may be said, what was the good of such bravery? (I believe I am right in saying that eight British generals fell at Inkerman; nor were the French behindhand in this respect, for, at the storming of the Malakoff, on June 18th, 1855, they had five generals killed and General Macmahon was one of the first to mount the

[1] *Recollections of a Military Life*, General Sir John Adye, pp. 144-145 (1895).

scarp.) The answer to this question is given by Fortescue: at Inkerman, he says, the moral ascendancy of the British was astonishing: 'They met every attack virtually with a counter-offensive, and hesitated not to encounter any numbers whether with bullet, bayonet or butt. There never was a fight in which small parties of scores, tens, and even individuals, showed greater audacity or achieved more surprising results. They never lost heart nor, by all accounts, cheerfulness. The enemy might be in front, flanks or rear, or at all three points together: it mattered not. They flew at them quite undismayed and bored their way out. . . . Never have the fighting qualities of the British soldier been seen to greater advantage than at Inkerman. But it was wrong to call Inkerman, as it was styled, a soldier's battle. It was a regimental officer's battle, and to the regimental officer belongs the credit.'[1]

But still the question remains: Would the regimental officers have behaved as they did behave had the generals been

[1] *A History of the British Army*, Hon. J. W. Fortescue, vol. xiii, pp. 137-139 (1930).

Plaza Toro-ing it in rear? Had they been on their ships at Balaclava, would Fortescue ever have been able to write these glowing words? I doubt it.

Again, it may be said that the Crimean War was one thing and the World War another. True; but did the Plaza Toro-ing during the World War help on our battles? I doubt it more and more each time I examine these dreary, soulless, mechanical surgings. We think that generals sitting in dug-outs did help on these battles; my own opinion is that in most cases, and there are exceptions to every rule, they had no more influence on them than had they been lying in their graves.

To turn now to the American Civil War, the last of the old heroic wars, nevertheless the first of the great modern wars, for it was the first extensive conflict in which the influences of steam power in all its many forms were felt. It is true that several of them made themselves felt during the Crimean War and Napoleon III's Italian War of 1859; but the first of these wars was mainly a siege operation, and the second too restricted

a struggle to be looked upon as the birth of the modern epoch.

In the American Civil War the muzzle-loading percussion-capped rifle dominated every field. It had an effective range of 600 yards compared to the flint-lock's 100, and a maximum range of about a mile; whilst the rifled 10-pounder and 20-pounder guns had, respectively, ranges of 6,200 and 4,500 yards, compared to the Napoleonic 12-pounders' 1,500. In this war, magazine breech-loading rifles were invented and used, more particularly by the Federal cavalry, as well as bombs, grenades, and several other projectiles; gas-shells were considered and also flame projectors; armoured ships and armoured trains were employed, and in the latter stages of the War the field telegraph was seen on every battlefield. Yet, in spite of all these and many other inventions, only rivalled by those of the World War, generalship remained of a high order. Probably no war in the whole of military history produced such a galaxy of generals. In this war, the first of the modern wars, vastly increased weapon power in no way gave

a lie to the old theory of generalship, undoubtedly it modified it, but it in no way effaced it—the personal factor remained supreme.

To examine two cases only, namely, the generalship of Grant and Lee, for a hundred others could be cited, both these soldiers relied upon the personal factor and had one thing in common—their scorn of danger. In his first battle at Belmont, a small affair, Grant as a strategist or tactician was nonexistent; still he is the general, the true leader, for he is the last man to leave the field, risking his life to see that none of his men have been left behind. At Fort Donelson, he was not on the battlefield when his army was attacked, and upon returning to it, he found it half-routed; how did he act? General Lewis Wallace, one of his subordinate commanders and the author of that stirring romance, *Ben Hur,* says:

'In every great man's career there is a crisis exactly similar to that which now overtook General Grant, and it cannot be better described than as a crucial test of his nature. A mediocre person would

have accepted the news as an argument for persistence in his resolution to enter upon a siege. Had General Grant done so, it is very probable his history would have been then and there concluded. His admirers and detractors are alike invited to study him at this precise juncture. It cannot be doubted that he saw with painful distinctness the effect of the disaster to his right wing. His face flushed slightly. With a sudden grip he crushed the papers in his hand. But in an instant these signs of disappointment or hesitation—as the reader pleases—cleared away. In his ordinary quiet voice he said, addressing himself to both officers (McClernand and Lewis Wallace), "Gentlemen, the position on the right must be retaken" ..."[1]

What did he then do? Did he sit down and write an operation order? No! He galloped down the line shouting to his men: 'Fill your cartridge boxes quick, and get into line; the enemy is trying to escape, and he must not be permitted to do so. ...' 'This', as he says himself,

[1] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. i, p. 422 (1884-88).

'acted like a charm. The men only wanted someone to give them a command."[1] It was his presence and self-control which established order. The presence of the general-in-chief, in the face of danger, at once creates confidence, for his personality is fused into the impersonal crowd, and the higher his self-control the higher does this confidence grow, it magnetizes his men and morally re-unifies them. No operation order could have accomplished this, and without this change in moral feeling, which the personality of the general-in-chief could alone effect, no operation order would have been of much use.

At the opening of the battle of Shiloh, Grant was faced by a similar though still more desperate situation, and one more difficult for him personally, for having injured his leg a day or two before he hobbled off the boat at Pittsburgh, landing on crutches. Met by 5,000 panic-stricken stragglers and every possible rumour of disaster, what does he do? He mounts his horse and gallops towards the

[1] *Personal Memoirs*, Ulysses S. Grant, vol. I, pp. 307-308 (1885).

battle front, and is here, there and everywhere. His personality at once seizes upon his men and morally shakes them out of chaos into order. Once again the general-in-chief wins the battle with that supreme weapon—the personal factor.

It is always the same with this great man, or any other great soldier. At the opening of the Wilderness Campaign, as usual, his headquarters were pitched close to the battle front. During the fighting on May 6th, 1864, the Federal line was driven back and a panic resulted, in which an excited officer rushed up to where Grant was sitting and shouted; 'General, wouldn't it be prudent to move headquarters to the other side of the Germanna road?' To which came the answer: 'It strikes me it would be better to order up some artillery and defend the present location.' [1]

With Grant, there was no turning away from danger, he always faced it. On another occasion, when Fort Harrison was captured, on September 29th, 1864, as usual Grant was well forward

[1] *Campaigning with Grant*, General Horace Porter, p. 59 (1897).

and came under heavy fire, one shell bursting immediately over him as he was writing a dispatch. 'The handwriting of the dispatch when finished', writes one of his staff officers, 'did not bear the slightest evidence of the uncomfortable circumstances under which it was indited.'[1] On yet another occasion when supervising an attack, he dismounted and sat down on a fallen tree to write a message. 'While thus engaged a shell exploded directly in front of him. He looked up from his paper an instant, and then, without the slightest change of countenance, went on writing the message. Some of the Fifth Wisconsin wounded were being carried past him at the time, and Major E. R. Jones of that regiment says ... that one of his men made the remark: "Ulysses don't scare worth a d——n."'[2] It is such generals who *can* lead men, who can *win* victories and not merely machine them out.

With his great opponent, Robert E. Lee, it is the same. It was his personality, his example, his close contact with

[1] *Ibid.* p. 302.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 96-97.

his men which infused into the Army of Northern Virginia its astonishing heroism. When on the third day of the battle of Gettysburg his great assault failed, and his men were driven back defeated, where was Lee? Forward among the Federal shells. Colonel Fremantle, a British officer present, says: 'If Longstreet's conduct was admirable, that of General Lee was perfectly sublime. He was engaged in rallying and in encouraging the broken troops, and was riding about a little in front of the wood, quite alone—the whole of his staff being engaged in a similar manner further to the rear. His face, which is always placid and cheerful, did not show signs of the slightest disappointment, care or annoyance; and he was addressing to every soldier he met a few words of encouragement, such as, "All this will become right in the end: we'll talk it over afterwards; but, in the meantime, all good men must rally. We want all good and true men just now," etc. ...'[1]

[1] *Three Months in the Southern States, April-June, 1863*, Lieut.-Colonel Fremantle, p. 274 (1863).

When, on May 12th, 1864, Grant's troops broke through the apex of the Confederate works at Spottsylvania and the position became critical, what did Lee do? He again rode forward. Of this incident General Gordon writes:

'Lee looked a very god of war. Calmly and grandly, he rode to a point near the center of my line and turned his horse's head to the front, evidently resolved to lead in person the desperate charge, and drive Hancock back or perish in the effort. I knew what he meant. ...I resolved to arrest him in his effort, and thus save to the Confederacy the life of its great leader. I was at the center of that line when General Lee rode to it. With uncovered head, he turned his face towards Hancock's advancing column. Instantly I spurred my horse across old Traveller's (Lee's favourite charger) front, and grasping his bridle in my hand, I checked him. Then, in a voice which I hoped might reach the ears of my men and command their attention, I called out, "General Lee, you shall not lead my men in a charge. No man can

do that, sir. Another is here for that purpose. These men behind you are Georgians, Virginians, and Carolinians. They have never failed you on any field. They will not fail you here. Will you, boys?" The response came like a mighty anthem that must have stirred his emotions as no other music could have done. . . . "No, no, no; we'll not fail him"...I shouted to General Lee, "You must go to the rear." The echo, "General Lee to the rear, General Lee to the rear!" rolled back with tremendous emphasis from the throats of my men."[1]

When in the World War did the men in the battle front order one of our generals back, let alone the general-in-chief? Never! No general-in-chief was to be found there, sometimes, perhaps, a brigadier, but as far as I have been able to ascertain, with the solitary exception of Major-General Elles, never a corps or a divisional commander. Why? This is my next problem; these men were not cowards, far from it, for many were potentially as gallant and courageous as

[1] *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, General John B. Gordon, p. 270 (1904).

Grant or Lee, as Lord Raglan or Sir Colin Campbell. No, it was not cowardice, it was the amazing unconscious change which rose out of the Franco-Prussian War, and which in a few years obliterated true generalship, dehumanizing and despiritualizing the general, until he was turned into an office soldier, a telephone operator, a dug-out dweller, a mechanical presser of buttons which would detonate battles, as if armies were well tamped explosives or intricate soulless machines.