

joyed by ferocious mercenaries, alike strangers to the laws, the manners, and the language of Rome—the army was chiefly composed of citizens, but of citizens who in the habits of warfare and pillage had forgotten the sacred duties which that character imposes, and were as willing to turn their arms against their country upon the command of their chief, as the enemy whom they were raised to oppose. Such will ever be the case with men who make war a profession—and the fate of Rome, will be the fate of America, and of every other republic, which does not take effectual means to inspire its citizens with a military spirit, and train them to the use of arms.

It is much to be regretted that a disposition adverse to improvement in the military art should exist amongst the people of the western country, and it is the more surprising, as it does not arise from the want of military spirit, but from a belief that discipline is unnecessary, and that the untutored rifleman is the most formidable of all warriors.

Certain events in the history of the western country have given strength to this opinion. "The regular and disciplined armies" say its advocates, "of Braddock & St. Clair, were defeated by the savages, as these have frequently been by undisciplined militia, therefore undisciplined militia, armed with rifles, are superior to regular troops armed with the musket and bayonet." There is so much plausibility in this reasoning, and so much mischief in the opinion it supports, that too much pains cannot be taken to shew the fallacy of the one, and entirely to eradicate the other.—It is not difficult to conceive that an army in the highest state of discipline, may be placed in such a situation by the unskillfulness of its leader as to make it an easy prey to the rudest savages. The destruction of the Roman legions in Germany under Varus, and the army of Braddock in America, are two out of many instances of this kind with which history will furnish us—but this same history will also inform us, that notwithstanding a battle may be gained, or even a campaign successfully terminated by undisciplined valor, acting against veteran troops, it has never happened that a nation which cultivated the military art, has been subdued by one which set no value on its attainment. The subversion of the Roman empire by barbarians forms no exception to this opinion, for those barbarians were superior to the then Romans, in every martial, and almost in every civil virtue—of those legions which had conquered the world, feeble skeletons only remained; distinguished indeed by the ensigns which had once directed the skilful evolutions of a brave and free people—but which had become disgraced by the protection of effeminate slaves, who were as much unable to bear the arms and perform the exercise of Roman soldiers, as to comprehend the fire of patriotism and liberty which animated the armies of Marius and Scipio. But although discipline & valor were no longer the characteristics of a Roman army, the tactics of the earlier ages were not entirely forgotten, a few individuals still read the immortal works of Caesar and Polybius, and the small remains of military science, was sufficient to sustain for many ages the tottering fabric of the empire, assailed on all sides by immense swarms of warlike barbarians. Never were the effects of generalship more conspicuous than in the achievements of Julius and Boniface, of Belisarius and Narses—these great men placed at the head of armies which were little better than bands of undisciplined plunderers, were enabled by a series of artful manœuvres, to render useless the great superiority of their enemies in numbers and valor.

But hundreds of instances are to be found in the Roman and Grecian histories to shew the great inferiority of mere courage, with the advantage of numbers, and even of skill in the soldier in the management of his arms, when opposed to troops who can manœuvre well, and are commanded by a general possessing genius and science. What has been said above of the success of raw troops in the American and French revolutions, is not incompatible with this opinion, but rather tends to confirm it. The advantage of talents in the generals was certainly on the side of America and France, and they very wisely adopted their operations to the kind of troops they commanded. The alertness and activity of these troops enabled them to perform great marches with facility—they were therefore employed in a dislatory

warfare—to harass the enemy and cut off his convoys, and by this means time was gained to form an army capable of meeting in an equal field. It was in this kind of warfare that the great efficacy of the rifle was first discovered, and altho' scarcely known in the European armies at the commencement of the American revolution, it has now become a favorite weapon, to be employed as a *corps avance*, or upon the wings and rear of an enemy—but no general has ever thought of making it a substitute for the musket and bayonet. No species of troops are more to be dreaded than a good rifle corps, when acting under the cover of fences, hedges or forests—but in an open country, when opposed either to cavalry or infantry, the rifle is the most contemptible of all arms—the musket and bayonet are adapted to all situations.

The volunteers who served under you, my dear general, in the campaign of 1794, acknowledged, I think, that no number of riflemen could have resisted the charge of general Wayne's army on the 20th of August, of that year. Nothing can shew more clearly than the result of this action does, that the defeat of Braddock is not to be attributed to the kind of arms which were in the hands of his men, nor to their want of valor, but to the deficiency of the general in the talents to adapt his manœuvres to the nature of the country and the enemy he had to encounter. Close order, and platoon firing, will not answer in a forest. Philip of Macedon, conquered Greece, and his son Alexander, the empire of Persia, by the strength of the phalanx—but this formidable body could not operate in broken or uneven ground, and whenever it was opposed by a general who had the talents to take advantage of this circumstance, and commanded by one who would suffer himself to be drawn into a situation unfavorable to its operations, its destruction was certain. If gen. Wayne had marched his army in close columns, instead of those long flexible columns in files, which enabled him to penetrate the woods with facility, and to present a very extended front to the enemy on every point of attack—if he had neglected to reconnoiter the country in every direction as he advanced to prevent an attack from the enemy before he completed his disposition to receive them—or if, instead of putting them up with the bayonet, and keeping up the charge until they were entirely broken and dispersed, he had permitted them to exercise their skill in distant shooting from behind trees, the 20th of August, 1794, would now have produced as melancholy recollections as the fourth of November, 1791.

But I am persuaded that from a particular examination of the campaigns & battles which took place in the course of the war between the people of the Western country and the Indians, it would appear that whenever the former have been successful, a considerable portion of that success is to be attributed to the military knowledge of their leaders, and that when this was wanting, their valor and great accuracy in shooting the rifle did not always secure them from defeat. Your own, and the campaigns of Clark and Wilkinson, are instances of the former, as the defeats of Crawford, Loughery and the Blue Licks, are of the latter. I have examined the ground which was the scene of the defeat at the Blue Licks, and if I was correctly informed as to the disposition of the two armies, it appears to me that nothing could have been more easy than to entrap the Indians in the very toils which they had prepared for their adversaries. The ambuscade was well arranged to ensnare a rash and imprudent enemy, but the smallest degree of military skill upon the part of the Kentucky commander would have been sufficient to put the Indians in the very *coup de sac* which proved so fatal to himself and his men. I am far from thinking so unfavorably of the rifle, as our valued friend, the late general Wayne. The covert fighting which that arm requires, was so contrary to the ardour of his disposition, which was for deciding every thing with the bayonet, that he always declared, that the use of the rifle would make cowards of the bravest troops. Instead of wishing to see the rifle banished from our armies, considering the nature of our country, and the great predilection of the people of the western states in its favor, I would recommend that at least two thirds of the militia of this section of the union should be armed with it. The prejudices which have been nourished by long habit are very difficult

to remove—our back woodsmen could not easily be induced to give up their favorite arm, nor indeed does their appear any necessity for it. If the western states were to form a separate nation, it would be proper so to organize its force so as to have all the various descriptions of troops which compose a modern army, but as the tie which unites us to the Atlantic states, is, I hope indissoluble, the whole militia of the union should be considered as one great army, and in the distribution of the several corps particular regard should be had to the manners, the habits, and even the prejudices of the people. This circumstance has been attended to with great advantage by every military nation, and in every age.

A Roman army was thought to be most formidable when the strength of the legions was supported by the velites or light troops of the neighboring allies—the Numidian horse (the hussars of the ancients) the cavalry of Thessaly, and the slingers of the Balleæaniles. Even in the formation of the present European armies, the habits of the people are particularly regarded in their military destinations—neither the emperors of Germany or France, or the king of England would think of recruiting their cavalry in the mountains of the Tyrol, the cantons of Switzerland, or the highlands of Scotland—nor would the former of these princes find his account in reducing to infantry battalions those fine bodies of hussars with which his Hungarian and Polish provinces supply him. The people of the latter countries have been accustomed for ages to make war on horseback—they make the finest light cavalry in the world, but contemptible infantry. In the formation of a grand army of the union, the militia of the western country might compose the *corps avance*, consisting of mounted and dismounted rifle men, & all the various descriptions of light cavalry—the eastern and middle states would furnish the artillery and infantry of the line—and those of the south the cavalry of the line and light infantry.—No cavalry in the world would excel those, my dear general, which our native state could produce—for fleetness and fire the horses are equal to those of the ancient Capadoccia or Thessaly, and for grace and dexterity in the management of them, the natives are unrivaled. Possessing as we do then the materials for forming a national militia which shall unite all the desirable qualities of the best appointed European army—why do we not give them that polish of which they are so eminently susceptible?—It is admitted by all that the times are portentous. The storm which has so long dislodged the old world, has never presented to us an aspect more threatening.—Its violence has yet reached that only, which to loose is not death. Shall we bewail the loss of our commerce, when competency and liberty remain.—But the latter can be preserved only by the arms and discipline which obtained it. Why then is there so much indifference manifested upon this all important subject?—Why is year after year suffered to roll away without the adoption of some efficient plan?—If there is difficulty in the thing, is not that difficulty constantly increasing as the devouring hand of time constantly deprives us of those from whom we could derive instruction. The heroes of the revolution are fast sinking in the grave.—Shall we not seize the moment when enough are left to animate us by their precept and example, to the attainment of those military accomplishments, which are so necessary for the defence of our country?—Will a nation of free-men suffer themselves to be outdone in any honorable pursuit by the vile instruments of ambition and tyranny, which compose the armies of Europe?—“a band of mercenaries whose only hope is that of pay, whose only fear is that of punishment.”

It is to obtain your protest, my dear sir, against the inefficient and ridiculous systems of discipline with which the people have been so long and so uselessly harassed which has induced me to trouble you with the foregoing observations.

Your state possesses an advantage which is scarcely left to any other in the union, of three distinguished revolutionary officers to direct the efforts of its citizens in the attainment of military information. The exertions of a Scott, a Hopkins, and a Polley, might be sufficient to put into operation a system that would soon pervade the continent, which would vindicate the American character for having neglected that to which Rome and Athens were in-

debted for their glory, and without which no republic can long exist—a *disciplined militia*.

That you may be amongst the last of those who may be called to enjoy in another world the happiness you have deserved for contributing to emancipate a nation in this, is the sincere prayer of

Dear sir,
Your friend,
WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON,
His Excellency Charles Scott,
Governor of Kentucky.

*Numerous examples might be produced of whole nations being kept in subjection by small bodies of disciplined troops. In general, however, the people in those despotic governments which preserve their authority by means of standing armies, are not allowed the use of arms. But a striking example of the truth of the opinion given above, is to be found in the Spartan republic. The Spartans, or the inhabitants of the city of Lacedemon, with those of the same origin who lived in the country, and who were called Lacedemonians, were enabled by the force of discipline alone, to keep in subjection for ages, the Helots, & other ancient inhabitants of Laconia.—These men were not only allowed the use of arms, but upon almost every occasion formed the greater part of a Lacedemonian army—nor were they deficient in bravery—for they frequently deserved, and sometimes obtained by their valor, emancipation, and even admission into the body of Spartan citizens. But they were not allowed to learn that admirable discipline which distinguished the Oplites, or heavy armed infantry of Sparta. Their arms were lighter, and they performed those duties in relation to the Spartan phalanx, that the Velites, or light armed allies did for the Roman legions. In every campaign these troops were equal in numbers to the Oplites, and frequently exceeded them in the proportion of four or five to one—at the battle of Platea, there were but 10,000 Spartans and Lacedemonians, out of 45,000 which composed their army—and at that of Leuctra, but 600. And yet such was the terror which the Spartan valor and discipline inspired in the Helots, that the former were not afraid to trust themselves in the same camp, at a distance from their country, in such disproportionate numbers, with men who had all the injuries and insults to revenge which make the most lasting impression upon the human heart.

†Cæsar had but 5000 men when he passed the Rubicon.

‡Governor St. Clair has been unjustly blamed for the defeat on the 4th of Nov. 1791, with such troops as composed the greater part of his army, it was impossible to conquer.

DOCTOR C. W. GRIFFIN,

WILL practice *PHYSIC* and *SURGERY* in all its various branches, in Vincennes & its vicinity.—He keeps his shop at Peter Jones's Esqr. where he will always be in readiness to wait upon those who may think proper to favor him their custom.

Vincennes, 10th August, 1810.

Two Dollars Reward.

STRAYED from the Vincennes common, sometime the first of June last, a bright bay horse, fifteen and a half hands high, light made, a star in his forehead, no brands recollect, a high spirited elegant riding horse, thin in flesh when he went away; he was got by the old Highlander, and very much resembles him—whoever delivers said horse to the subscriber, or secures him so that he can be got shall receive the above reward with all reasonable expences.

James Lindsey.
August 6th, 1810.

NOTICE,

HEREBY give public notice to my creditors—Laurent Bazadonne, Charles Villeneuve, Francis Bazzillion, Hyacinthe Laffelle, Alexander Valle, General W. Johnston, Antoine Marchal, Doctor Elias M'Namee, Antoine Drouette, Pierre Bonnault, Urbain Guillet, and John L. Neely, that I intend to apply to be discharged under the law of the territory for the release of insolvent debtors, at the court of Common Pleas of Knox county, on the first day of next September court.

Et. Z. Gonet.
July 30th, 1810.