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Introductory Material to Summary of the Art of War

by Jomini

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SUMMARY
OF THE
ART OF WAR,
OR
A NEW ANALYTICAL COMPEND

OF THE
PRINCIPAL COMBINATIONS OF STRATEGY, OF GRAND
TACTICS AND OF MILITARY POLICY

BY
BARON DE JOMINI
GENERAL-IN-CHIEF, AIDE-DE-CAMP GENERAL TO HIS MAJESTY
THE EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY
MAJOR O. F. WINSHIP, ASS'T. ADJ'T. GENERAL, U.S. A.
LIEUT. E. E. McLEAN, 1ST INFANTRY, U.S.A.

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TO HIS MAJESTY,
THE EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

SIRE,

YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY, *in his just solicitude for all that can contribute to the progress and the propagation of the sciences, deigned to order the translation into the Russian language of my TREATISE UPON GRAND MILITARY OPERATIONS, for the institutes of the crown.*

Eager to respond to the benevolent views of YOUR MAJESTY, I believed it my duty to augment this work by an ANALYTICAL COMPEND, which would serve as a compliment [sic] to it. This first essay, published in 1830, accomplished the object for which it had been written; but I have since thought that by enlarging somewhat its frame, it would be possible to render it more useful and to make of it a work complete in itself; I trust I have obtained that result.

Notwithstanding its small compass, this Summary now contains all the combinations which the general of an army and the statesman can make for the conduct of a war: never was so important a subject treated within limits at the same time more compact and more in the reach of all readers.

I take the liberty of doing homage through this Summary to YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY, begging him to be pleased to receive it with indulgence. My wishes would be crowned if this work could merit the suffrages of a judge so enlightened, or a monarch so versed in the important art which elevates and preserves empires.

I am, with veneration,

SIRE,

YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY'S

Most humble and faithful servant,

GENERAL JOMINI

St. Petersburg, 6th March, 1837.

NOTICE OF THE PRESENT THEORY OF WAR, AND OF ITS UTILITY

The summary of the art of war, which I submit to the public, was written originally for the instruction of an august prince, and in view of the numerous additions which I have just made to it, I flatter myself that it will be worthy of its destination. To the end of causing its object to be better appreciated, I believe it my duty to precede it by a few lines upon the present state of the theory of war. I shall be forced to speak a little of myself and my works; I hope I shall be pardoned for it, for it would have been difficult to explain what I think of this theory, and the part which I may have had in it, without saying how I have conceived it myself.

As I have said in my chapter of principles, published by itself in 1807, *the art of war has existed in all time*, and *strategy* especially was the same under Caesar as under Napoleon. But the art, confined to the understanding of great captains, existed in no written treatise. The books all gave but fragments of systems, born of the imagination of their authors, and containing ordinarily details the most minute (not to say the most puerile), upon the most accessory points of tactics, the only part of war, perhaps, which it is possible to subject to fixed rules.

Among the moderns, Feuquières [*sic*],* Folard and Puysegur had opened the quarry: the first by very interesting, critical and dogmatical accounts; the second by his commentaries upon Polybus and his treatise upon the

* Feuquières was not sufficiently appreciated by his cotemporaries [*sic*], at least as a writer; he had the instinct of strategy as Folard that of tactics, and Puysegur that of *la logistique*.

column; the third by a work which was, I believe, the first logistic essay, and one of the first applications of the oblique order of the ancients.

But those writers had not penetrated very far into the mine which they wished to explore, and in order to form a just idea of the state of the art in the middle of the 18th century, it is necessary to read what Marshal Saxe wrote in the preface to his *Reveries*.

“War,” said he, “is a science shrouded in darkness, in the midst of which we do not move with an assured step; routine and prejudices are its basis, a natural consequence of ignorance.

“All sciences have principles, war alone has yet none; the great captains who have written do not give us any; one must be profound to comprehend them.

“Gustavus Adolphus has created a method, but it was soon deviated from, because it was learned by routine. There are then nothing but usages, *the principles of which are unknown to us.*”

This was written about the time when Frederick the Great precluded the Seven Years War by his victories of Hohenfriedberg, of Soor, &c. And the good Marshal Saxe, instead of piercing those obscurities of which he complained with so much justice, contented himself with writing systems for clothing soldiers in woolen blouses, for forming them upon four ranks, two of which to be armed with pikes; finally for proposing small field pieces which he named *amusettes*, and which truly merited that title on account of the humorous images with which they were surrounded.

At the end of the Seven Years War, some good works appeared; Frederick himself, not content with being a great king, a great captain, a great philosopher and great historian, made himself also a didactic author by his instructions to his generals. Guichard, Turpin, Maizeroy, Menil-Durand, sustained controversies upon the tactics of the ancients as well as upon that of their own time, and gave some interesting treatises upon those matters. Turpin commented Montecuculi and Vegetius; the Marquis de Silva in Piedmont, Santa Cruz in Spain, had also discussed some parts with success; finally d'Escremeville sketched a history of the art, which was not devoid of merit. But all that by no means dissipated the darkness of which the conqueror of Fontenoy complained.

A little later came Grimoard, Guibert and Lloyd; the first two caused progress to be made in the tactics of battles and in *la logistique*.* This latter raised in his interesting memoirs important questions of strategy, which he unfortunately left buried in a labyrinth of minute details on the tactics of formation, and upon the philosophy of war. But although the author has resolved none of these questions in a manner to make of them a connected system, it is necessary to render him the justice to say that he first pointed out the good route. However, his narrative of the Seven Years War, of which he finished but two campaigns, was more instructive (for me at least), than all he had written dogmatically.

Germany produced, in this interval between the Seven Years War and that of the Revolution, a multitude of writings, more or less extensive, on different secondary branches of the art, which they illumined with a faint

* Guibert, in an excellent chapter upon *marches*, touches upon strategy, but he did not realize what this chapter promised.

light. Thielke and Faesch published in Saxony, the one, fragments upon castrametation, the attack of camps and positions, the other a collection of maxims upon the accessory parts of the operations of war. Scharnhorst did as much in Hanover; Warnery published in Prussia a pretty good work on the cavalry; Baron Holzendorf another on the tactics of manoeuvres. Count Kevenhuller gave maxims upon field warfare and upon that of sieges. But nothing of all this gave a satisfactory idea of the elevated branches of the science.

Finally even Mirabeau who, having returned from Berlin, published an enormous volume upon the Prussian tactics, an arid repetition of the regulation for platoon and line evolutions to which some had the simplicity to attribute the greater part of the successes of Frederick! If such books have been able to contribute to the propagation of this error, it must be owned however that they contributed also to perfecting the regulations of 1791 on manoeuvres, the only result which it was possible to expect from them.

Such was the art of war at the commencement of the 19th century, when Porbeck, Venturini and Bulow published some pamphlets on the first campaigns of the Revolution. The latter especially made a certain sensation in Europe by his *Spirit of the System of Modern Warfare*, the work of a man of genius, but which was merely sketched, and which added nothing to the first notions given by Lloyd. At the same time appeared also in Germany, under the modest title of an introduction to the study of the military art, a valuable work by M. de Laroche-Aymon, veritable encyclopedia for all the branches of the art, strategy excepted, which is there scarcely indicated; but despite this omission, it is

nonetheless one of the most complete and recommendable of the classic works.

I was not yet acquainted with the last two books, when, after having quitted the Helvetic service as chief of battalion, I sought to instruct myself by reading, with avidity, all those controversies which had agitated the military world in the last half of the 18th century; commencing with Puysegur, finishing with Menil-Durand and Guibert, and finding everywhere but *systems* more or less complete of the tactics of battles, which could give but an imperfect idea of war, because they all contradicted each other in a deplorable manner.

I fell back then, upon works of military history in order to seek, in the combinations of the great captains, a solution which those systems of the writers did not give me. Already had the narratives of Frederick the Great commenced to initiate me in the secret which had caused him to gain the miraculous victory of Leuthen (Lissa). I perceived that this secret consisted in the very simple manoeuvre of carrying the bulk of his forces upon a single wing of the hostile army; and Lloyd soon came to fortify me in this conviction. I found again, afterwards, the same cause in the first successes of Napoleon in Italy, which gave me the idea *that by applying, through strategy, to the whole chess-table of a war (a tout l' echiquier d'une querre), this same principle which Frederick had applied to battles, we should have the key to all the science of war.*

I could not doubt this truth in reading again, subsequently, the campaigns of Turenne, of Marlborough, or Eugene of Savoy, and in comparing them with those of

Frederick, which Tempelhoff had just published with details so full of interest, although somewhat heavy and by far too much repeated. I comprehended then that Marshal de Saxe had been quite right in saying that in 1750 there were no principles laid down upon the art of war, but that many of his readers had also very badly interpreted his preface in concluding therefrom that he had thought that those principles did not exist.

Convinced that I had seized the true point of view under which it was necessary to regard the theory of war in order to discover its veritable rules, and to quit the always so uncertain field of personal systems, I set myself to the work with all the ardor of a neophyte.

I wrote in the course of the year 1803, a volume which I presented, at first, to M. d'Oubril, Secretary of the Russian legation at Paris, then to Marshal Ney. But the strategic work of Bulow, and the historical narrative of Lloyd, translated by Roux-Fazillac, having then fallen into my hands, determined me to follow another plan. My first essay was a didactic treatise upon the orders of battle, strategic marches and lines of operations; it was arid from its nature and quite interspersed with historical citations which, grouped by species, had the inconvenience of presenting together, in the same chapter, events often separated by a whole century; Lloyd especially convinced me that the critical and argumentative relation of the whole of a war had the advantage of preserving connection and unity in the recital and in the events, without detriment to the exposition of maxims, since a series of ten campaigns is amply sufficient for presenting the application of all the possible maxims of war. I burned then my first work, and re-commenced [*sic*], with the

project of giving the sequel of the seven years war [*sic*] which Lloyd had not finished. This mode suited me all the better, as I was but twenty-four years old and had but little experience, whilst I was about to attack many prejudices and great reputations somewhat usurped, so that there was necessary to me the powerful support of the events which I should allow to speak, as it were, for themselves. I resolved then upon this last plan, which appeared moreover, more suitable to all classes of readers. Doubtless a didactic treatise would have been preferable, either for a public course, or for retracing with more ensemble the combinations of the science somewhat scattered in the narration of those campaigns; but, as for myself, I confess I have profited much more from the attentive reading of a discussed campaign, than from all the dogmatic works put together; and my book, published in 1805, was designed for officers of a superior grade, and not for schoolboys. The war with Austria supervening the same year, did not permit me to give the work all the care desirable, and I was able to execute but a part of my project.

Some years afterwards, the Arch Duke gave an introduction to his fine work by a folio volume on grand warfare, in which the genius of the master already showed itself. About the same time appeared a small pamphlet on strategy by Major Wagner, then in the service of Austria; this essay, full of wise views, promised that the author would one day give something more complete, which has been realized quite recently. In Prussia, General Scharnhorst commenced also to sound those questions with success.

Finally, ten years after my first treatise on grand operations, appeared the important work of the Arch Duke

Charles, which united the two kinds, didactic and historic; this prince having at first given a small volume of strategic maxims, then four volumes of critical history on the campaigns of 1796 and 1799, for developing their practical application. This work, which does as much honor to the illustrious prince as the battles which he has gained, put the complement to the basis of the strategic science, of which Lloyd and Bulow had first raised the veil, and of which I had indicated the first principles in 1805, in a chapter upon lines of operations, and in 1807, in a chapter upon the fundamental principles of the art of war, printed by itself at Glogau in Silesia.

The fall of Napoleon, by giving up many studious officers to the leisures of peace, became the signal for the apparition of a host of military writings of all kinds. General Rogniat gave matter for controversy in wishing to bring back the system of the legions, or of the divisions of the republic, and in attacking the somewhat adventurous system of Napoleon. Germany was especially fertile in dogmatic works; Xilander in Bavaria, Theobald and Muller of Wurtemberg, Wagner, Decker, Hoyer and Valintini in Prussia, published different books, which presented substantially but the repetition of the maxims of the Arch Duke Charles and mine, with other developments of application.

Although several of these authors have combatted my chapter on central lines of operations with more subtlety than real success, and others have been, at times, too precise in their calculations, we could not refuse to their writings the testimonials of esteem which they merit, for they all contain more or less of excellent views.

In Russia, General Okounief treated of the important article of the combined or partial employment of the three arms, which makes the basis of the theory of combats, and rendered thereby a real service to young officers.

In France, Gay-Vernon, Jacquinot de Presle and Roquancourt, published courses which were not wanting in merit.

Under these circumstances, I was assured by my own experience, that there was wanting, to my first treatise, a collection of maxims like that which preceded the work of the Arch Duke; which induced me to publish, in 1829, the first sketch of this analytical compend, adding to it two interesting articles upon the military policy of States.

I profited of this occasion to defend the principles of my chapter on lines of operations, which several writers had badly comprehended, and this polemic brought about at least more rational definitions, at the same time maintaining the real advantages of central operations.

A year after the publication of this analytical table, the Prussian General Clausewitz died, leaving to his widow the care of publishing posthumous works which were presented as unfinished sketches. This work made a great sensation in Germany, and for my part I regret that it was written before the author was acquainted with my summary of the Art of War, persuaded that he would have rendered to it some justice.

One cannot deny to General Clausewitz great learning and a facile pen; but this pen, at times a little vagrant, is above all too pretentious for a didactic discussion, the simplicity and clearness of which ought to be its first merit.

Besides that, the author shows himself by far too skeptical in point of military science; his first volume is but a declamation against all theory of war, whilst the two succeeding volumes, full of theoretic maxims, proves that the author believes in the efficacy of his own doctrines, if he does not believe in those of others.

As for myself, I own that I have been able to find in this learned labyrinth but a small number of luminous ideas and remarkable articles; and far from having shared the skepticism of the author, no work would have contributed more than his to make me feel the necessity and utility of good theories, if I had ever been able to call them in question; it is important simply to agree well as to the limits which ought to be assigned them in order not to fall into a pedantry worse than ignorance;* it is necessary above all to distinguish the difference which exists between *a theory of principles* and *a theory of systems*.

It will be objected perhaps that, in the greater part of the articles of this summary, I myself acknowledge that there are few absolute rules to give on the divers subjects of which they treat; I agree in good faith to this truth, but is that saying there is no theory? If, out of forty-five articles, some have ten positive maxims, others one or two only, are not a 150 or 200 rules sufficient to form a respectable body of strategic or tactical doctrines? And if to those you add the multitude of precepts which suffer more or less exceptions, will you not have more dogmas than necessary for fixing your opinions upon all the operations of war?

* An ignorant man, endowed with a natural genius, can do great things; but the same man stuffed with false doctrines studied at school, and crammed with pedantic systems, will do nothing good unless he forget what he had learned.

At the same epoch when Clausewitz seemed thus to apply himself to sapping the basis of the science, a work of a totally opposite nature appeared in France, that of the Marquis de Ternay, a French *emigre* in the service of England. This book is without contradiction, the most complete that exists on the tactics of battles, and if it falls sometimes into an excess contrary to that of the Prussian general, by prescribing, in doctrines details of execution often impracticable in war, he cannot be denied a truly remarkable merit, and one of the first grades among tacticians.

I have made mention in this sketch only of general treatises, and not of particular works on the special arms. The books of Montalembert, of Saint-Paul, Bousmard, of Carnot, of Aster, and of Blesson, have caused progress to be made in the art of sieges and of fortification. The writings of Laroche-Aymon, Muller and Bismark, have also thrown light upon many questions regarding the cavalry. In a journal with which, unfortunately, I was not acquainted until six years after its publication, the latter has believed it his duty to attack me and my works, because I had said, on the faith of an illustrious general, that the Prussians had reproached him with having copied, in his last pamphlet, the unpublished instructions of the government to its generals of cavalry. In censuring my works, General Bismark has availed himself of his rights, not only in virtue of his claim to reprisals, but because every book is made to be judged and controverted. Meanwhile, instead of replying to the reproach, and of giving utterance to a single grievance, he has found it more simple to retaliate by injuries, to which a military man will never reply in books, which should have another object than collecting personalities. Those who shall compare the present notice

with the ridiculous pretensions which General B _____ imputes to me, will judge between us.

It is extraordinary enough to accuse me of having said that the art of war did not exist before me, when in the chapter of Principles, published in 1807, of which I have before spoken, and which had a certain success in the military world, the first phrase commenced with these words: "*the art of war has existed from time immemorial.*" * * * What I have said is, that there were no books which proclaimed the existence of general principles, and made the application of them through strategy to all the combinations of the theatre of war: I have said that I was the first to attempt that demonstration, which others improved ten years after me, without, however, it being yet complete. Those who would deny this truth would not be candid.

As for the rest, I have never soiled my pen by attacking personally studious men who devote themselves to science, and if I have not shared their dogmas, I have expressed as much with moderation and impartiality; it were to be desired that it should ever be thus. Let us return to our subject.

The artillery, since Gribeauval and d'Urtubie has had its Aide-Memoire, and a mass of particular works, in the number of which are distinguished those of Decker, Paixhaus, Dedon, Hoyer, Ravichio and Bouvroy. The discussions of several authors, among others those of the Marquis de Chambray and of General Okounieff upon the fire of Infantry. Finally, the dissertations of a host of officers, recorded in the interesting military journals of Vienna, of Berlin, of Munich, of Stutgard [*sic*] and of Paris,

have contributed also to the successive progress of the parts which they have discussed.

Some essays have been attempted towards a history of the art, from the ancients down to our time. Tranchant Laverne has done so with spirit and sagacity, but incompletely. Cario Nisas, too verbose with regard to the ancients, mediocre for the epoch from the revival to that of the Seven Years War, has completely failed on the modern system. Roquancourt has treated the same subjects with more success. The Prussian Major Ciriaci and his continator have done still better. Finally, Captain Blanch, a Neapolitan officer, has made an interesting analysis of the different periods of the art as written and practised.

After this long list of modern writers, it will be judged that Marshal de Saxe, if he were to return among us, would be much surprised at the present wealth of our military literature, and would no longer complain of the darkness which shrouds the science. Henceforth good books will not be wanting to those who shall wish to study, for at this day we have principles, whereas they had in the 18th century only methods and systems.

Meanwhile, it must be owned, to render theory as complete as possible, there is an important work wanting, which, according to all appearances, will be wanting yet a long time; it is a thoroughly profound examination of the four different systems followed within a century past: that of the Seven Years War; that of the first campaigns of the Revolution; that of the grand invasions of Napoleon; finally, that of Wellington. From this investigation it would be necessary to deduce a mixed system, proper for regular wars, which should participate of the methods of Frederick and of those of Napoleon; or, more properly

speaking, it would be necessary to develop a double system for ordinary wars of power against power, and for grand invasions. I have sketched a view of this important labor, in article 24, chapter III: but as the subject would require whole volumes, I have been obliged to limit myself to indicating the task to him who should have the courage and the leisure to accomplish it well, and who should at the same time be fortunate enough to find the justification of those mixed doctrines, in new events which should serve him as tests.

In the meantime, I will terminate this rapid sketch by a profession of faith upon the polemics of which this compend and my first treatise have been the subject. In weighing all that has been said for or against, in comparing the immense progress made in the science for the last thirty years, with the incredulity of M. Clausewitz, I believe I am correct in concluding that the ensemble of my principles and of the maxims which are derived from them, has been badly comprehended by several writers; that some have made the most erroneous application of them; that others have drawn from them exaggerated consequences which have never been able to enter my head, for a general officer, after having assisted in a dozen campaigns, *ought to know that war is a great drama, in which a thousand physical or moral causes operate more or less powerfully, and which cannot be reduced to mathematical calculations.*

But, I ought equally to avow without circumlocution, that twenty years of experience have but fortified me in the following convictions:

“There exists a small number of fundamental principles of war, which could not be deviated from without

danger, and the application of which, on the contrary, has been in almost all time crowned with success.

“The maxims of application which are derived from those principles are also small in number, and if they are found sometimes modified according to circumstances, they can nevertheless serve in general as a compass to the chief of an army to guide him in the task, always difficult and complicated, of conducting grand operations in the midst of the noise and tumult of combats.

“Natural genius will doubtless know how, by happy inspirations, to apply principles as well as the best studied theory could do it; but a simple theory, disengaged from all pedantry, ascending to causes without giving absolute systems, based in a word upon a few fundamental maxims, will often supply genius, and will even serve to extend its development by augmenting its confidence in its own inspirations.

“Of all theories on the art of war, the only reasonable one is that which, founded upon the study of military history, admits a certain number of regulating principles, but leaves to natural genius the greatest part in the general conduct of a war without trammeling it with exclusive rules.

“On the contrary, nothing is better calculated to kill natural genius and to cause error to triumph, than those pedantic theories, based upon the false idea that war is a positive science, all the operations of which can be reduced to infallible calculations.

“Finally, the metaphysical and skeptical works of a few writers will not succeed, either, in causing it to be believed that there exists no rule for war, for their writings

prove absolutely nothing against maxims supported upon the most brilliant modern feats of arms, and justified by the reasoning even of those who believe they are combatting them.”

I hope, that after these avowals, I could not be accused of wishing to make of this art a mechanism of determined wheelworks, nor of pretending on the contrary that the reading of a single chapter of principles is able to give, all at once, the talent of conducting an army. In all the arts, as in all the situations of life, *knowledge* and *skill* are two altogether different things, and if one often succeed through the latter alone, it is never but the union of the two that constitutes a superior man and assures complete success. Meanwhile, in order not to be accused of pedantry, I hasten to avow that, by *knowledge*, I do not mean a vast erudition; it is not the question to *know a great deal* but to *know well*; to know especially what relates to the mission appointed us.

I pray that my readers, well penetrated with these truths, may receive with kindness this new summary, which may now, I believe, be offered as the book most suitable for the instruction of a prince or a statesman.

I have not thought it my duty to make mention, in the above notice, of the military historical works which have signalized our epoch, because they do not in reality enter into the subject which I have to treat. However, as those of our epoch have also contributed to the progress of the science, in seeking to explain causes of success, I shall be permitted to say a few words on them.

Purely military history is of a thankless and difficult kind, for, in order to be useful to men of the art, it requires details not less dry than minute, but necessary in order to cause positions and movements to be judged accurately. Therefore, until the imperfect sketch of the Seven Years War which Lloyd has given, none of the military writers had come out of the beaten track of official narratives or of panegyrics more or less fatiguing.

The military historians of the 18th century who had held the first rank were, Dumont, Quincy, Bourcet, Pezay, Grimoard, Retzow and Tempelhoff; the latter especially had made of it a kind of school, although his work is a little overcharged with the details of marches and encampments: details very good, without doubt for fields of combat, but very useless in the history of a whole war, since they are represented almost every day under the same form.

Purely military history has furnished, in France as in Germany, writings so numerous since 1792, that their nomenclature alone would form a pamphlet. I shall, nevertheless, signalize here the first campaigns of the Revolution by Grimoard; those of General Gravert; the memoirs of Suchet and of Saint-Cyr; the fragments of Gourgaud and of Montholon; the great enterprise of victories and conquests under the direction of General Beauvais; the valuable collection of battles by Colonel Wagner and that of Major Kaussler; the Spanish War by Napier; that of Egypt by Reynier; the campaigns of Suwaroff by Laverne; the partial narratives of Stutterheim and of Labaume.*

* We might cite yet the interesting narratives of Saintine, of Mortonval, of Lapenne[,] Lenoble, Lafaille, as well as those of the Prussian Major Spahl upon Catalonia, of Baron Volderndorf on the campaigns of the Bavarians, and a host of other writings of the same nature.

Until the fall of Napoleon, politico-military history had had for many centuries but a single remarkable work; that of Frederick the Great, entitled *History of my time*.^{*} This species, which demands at the same time an elegant style and a vast and profound knowledge of history and politics, requires also a military genius sufficient for judging events accurately. It would be necessary to describe the relations or the interests of states like Ancillon, and recount battles like Napoleon or Frederick, to produce a *chef-d'oeuvre* of this kind. If we still await this *chef-d'oeuvre*, it must be owned that some good works have appeared within the last thirty years; in this number we must put the war in Spain of Foy; the summary of military events of Mathieu H. Dumas, and the manuscripts of Fain; although the second is wanting in firm points of view, and the last sins through too much partiality. Afterwards come the works of M. Segur the younger, a writer full of genius and of wise views, who has proved to us, by the history of Charles VIII, that with a little more nature in his style he might bear away from his predecessors the historic palm of the great age which yet awaits its Polybus. In the third rank we shall place the histories of Toulangeon and of Servan.[†]

Finally, there is a third kind, that of critical history, applied to the principles of the art, and more especially designed to develop the relations of events with those principles. Feuquieres and Lloyd had indicated the road without having had many imitators until the Revolution.

^{*} Several political historians, like Ancillon, Segur the elder, Karamsin, Guichardin, Archenholz, Schiller, Daru, Michaud and Salvandy, have recounted also with talent many operations of war, but they cannot be counted in the number of military writers.

[†] I do not speak of the political and military life of Napoleon recounted by himself because it has been said that I was the author of it; with regard to those of Norvins and of Tibaudeau, they are not military.

This last species, less brilliant in its forms, is for that perhaps only the more useful in its results, especially where criticism is not pushed to the rigor which should often render it false and unjust.

Within the last twenty years, this half didactic, half critical history has made more progress than the others, or at least it has been cultivated with more success, and has produced incontestable results. The campaigns published by the Arch-Duke Charles, those anonymous ones of General Muffling, the partial relations of Generals Pelet, Boutourlin, Clausewitz,* Okounieff, Valentini, Ruhle; those of Messrs. de Laborde, Koch, de Chambray, Napier; finally, the fragments published by Messrs. Wagner and Scheel, in the interesting journals of Berlin and Vienna, have all more or less assisted in the development of the science of war. Perhaps I may be permitted also to claim a small part in this result in favor of my long critical and military history of the wars of the Revolution, and of the other historical works which I have published, for, written especially to prove the permanent triumph of the application of principles, those works have never failed to bring all the facts to this dominant point of view, and in this respect at least, they have had some success; I invoke in support of this assertion, the *piquante* critical analysis of the war of the Spanish Succession, given by Captain Dumesnil.

* The works of Clausewitz have been incontestably useful, although it is often less by the ideas of the author, than by the contrary ideas to which he gives birth. They would have been more useful still, if a pretentious and pedantic style did not frequently render them unintelligible. But if, as a didactic author, he has raised more doubts than he has discovered truths, as a critical historian, he has been an unscrupulous plagiarist [*sic*], pillaging his predecessors, copying their reflections, and saying evil afterwards of their works, after having travestied them under other forms. Those who shall have read my campaign of 1799, published ten years before his, will not deny my assertion, for there is not one of my reflections which he has not repeated.

Thanks to this concurrence of didactic works and of critical history, the teaching of the science is no longer so difficult, and the professors who would be embarrassed at this day, in making good courses with a thousand examples to support them, would be sad professors. It must not be concluded, however, that the art has arrived at that point that it cannot make another step towards perfection. There is nothing perfect under the sun!!! And if a committee were assembled under the presidency of the Arch Duke Charles or Wellington, composed of all the strategic and tactical notabilities of the age, together with the most skillful generals of engineers and artillery, this committee could not yet succeed in making a perfect, absolute and immutable theory on all the branches of war, especially on tactics!