



GENERAL NELSON A. MILES AND HIS AIDE, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MAUS, VIEWING THE MANŒUVERS OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY NEAR ST. PETERSBURG, IN HONOR OF THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE.

MILITARY EUROPE.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL NELSON A. MILES.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES AT THE AUTUMN MANŒUVERS IN RUSSIA, GERMANY, AND FRANCE.

THE autumn manœuvres in Europe are always of deep and important interest to military students. Each year officers from all of the principal countries of the world are sent by their governments to witness them, and to make reports upon them. Of late years they have been very elaborate in some of the countries, especially in Germany, France, and Russia. Many important lessons have been learned from observations made by military men in attendance on them, not only regarding tactical formations of troops, but also regarding all kinds of equipments, the quickest and safest means of transportation, and the food best adapted

for troops while in actual service. Many of the modern appliances of war have been tested also in these campaigns, and their use exemplified. To the countries maintaining them, simply the benefit derived from the physical training of men and from the discipline is perhaps a sufficient reward for the time, money, and energy spent in organizing and carrying them out.

I was especially fortunate during my travels in Europe in 1897 in having opportunity to witness the manœuvres held at Kresnoe-Selo, near St. Petersburg, and the grand manœuvres in Germany, and part of those in the north of France. I arrived in Russia



OFFICERS OF THE RUSSIAN GENDARMERIE PRECEDING AN IMPERIAL TRAIN.

on the 15th of August. I had previously communicated with our representative at St. Petersburg, the Hon. Clifton R. Breckinridge, whom I had known very pleasantly for a number of years as a distinguished member of Congress from Arkansas, and who had represented our government with marked ability at the Russian court, and he had made known to the Russian Government my wish to witness their manœuvres and to see such other military exercises as it might please them to permit me to see. I was duly introduced by Mr. Breckinridge to the Ministers of War and Foreign Affairs. They received me in a most courteous and friendly way, showing a desire to extend every civility. A very accomplished and experienced officer of the chevalier-garde, Lieutenant Tsertzoff, was detailed to report to me for duty during my stay, and

two royal carriages were placed at my disposal, while the Emperor entertained me and my party as guests.

I had been but two days at St. Petersburg when I received an invitation, which amounted to a command, to visit Peterhof, undoubtedly the most attractive summer palace in the world, at the present time occupied by the Emperor and Empress as their summer home. At the palace I was granted an interview by His Majesty, and was received with marked cordiality. The Emperor's manner is frank and unostentatious, and there is nothing in his speech or deportment to impress one with the large power possessed by him, a young man, being only thirty years old. He speaks English perfectly, is thoroughly informed on all military matters, and in general appearance is as much a student as a soldier. He devotes much



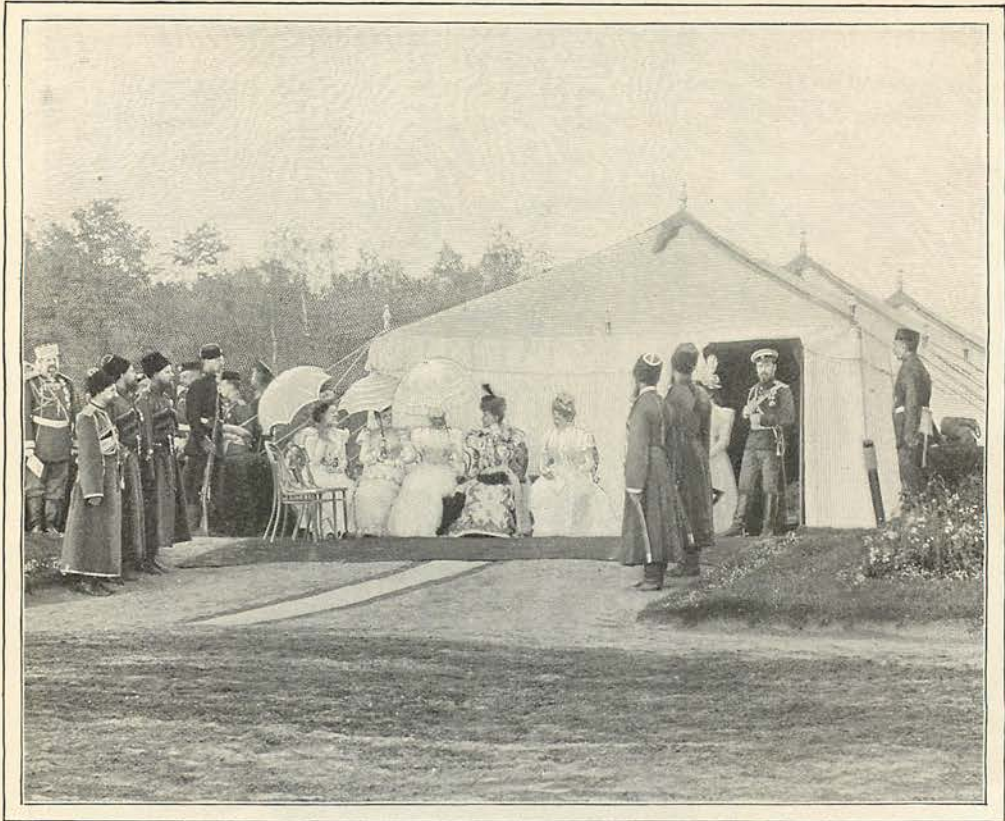
PRINCE KHLKOFF, RUSSIAN MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

From a photograph by Levitsky, St. Petersburg.



NICHOLAS II., EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

Nicholas II. succeeded to the Russian throne October 20, 1894. This portrait (from a photograph by De Jongh Frères, Paris) was taken while he was still Grand Duke.

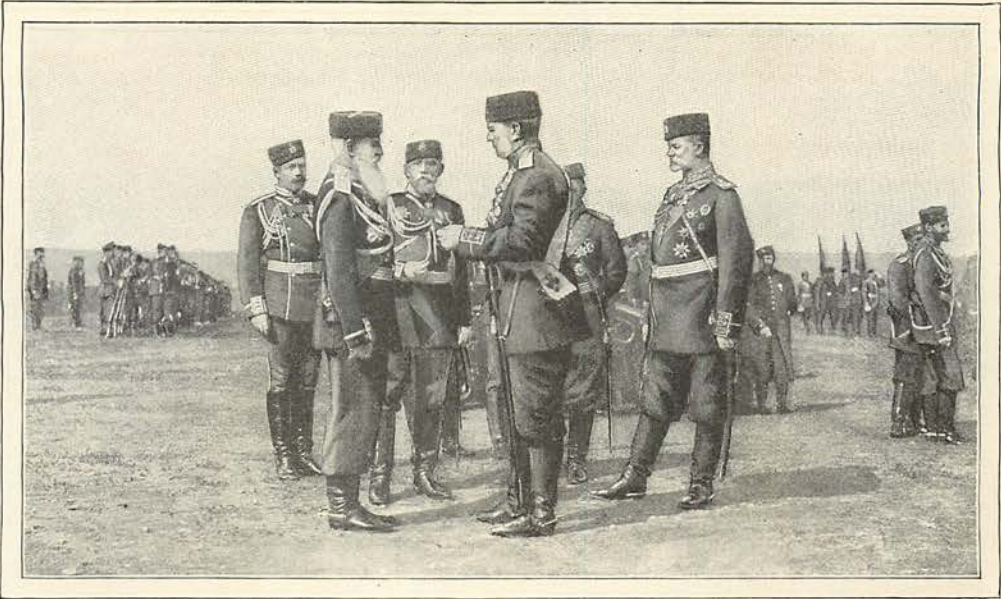


THE ROYAL PARTY AT THE REVIEW OF RUSSIAN TROOPS, HELD IN HONOR OF THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE.
THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS IS SEEN STANDING AT THE DOOR OF THE TENT.

attention to civil affairs, and is especially interested in the internal improvements, development, and commercial welfare of Russia.

My conversation with the Emperor touched first on military matters, and then drifted to the subject which appeared to be the one nearest his heart—the great Siberian railway, a work of vast commercial, political, and military importance to Russia. He himself passed over the zone that the railway is to penetrate, before he ascended the throne, and he is now president of the company which is rapidly constructing the work. In our talk, I referred to the great change that had been wrought in our own country by the construction of the trans-continental railroads, first definitely projected during the Civil War, for the purpose of holding the two sections of the country in closer union and more loyal sentiment. These railroads, I told the Emperor, had transformed a vast area of wild territory and mountain waste into settled, civilized, thriving, progressive communities in the space of a single genera-

tion; and I added that I presumed a similar result would follow the opening of the great avenue of communication and commerce now being constructed across the enormous area of the Russian Empire. I asked if the land would be divided into subdivisions in a way similar to that we had adopted in our own country and found so beneficial. The Emperor said that this was his purpose and design, and that he hoped for gratifying results. I remarked that we had found that, by dividing our public lands into small subdivisions and parceling it out to colonists, they became our most intelligent, loyal citizens, wedded and anchored to the soil; and that a man who possessed a quarter section of land was a more loyal citizen than one who simply owned a knife. The use of the last word seemed to cause His Majesty an unhappy thought, as I judged from his expression, yet he instantly resumed his pleasant mood, and talked upon the subject of the development of that great section of his empire with much interest, and expressed great hope that the completion of



A GROUP OF COMMANDERS IN THE RUSSIAN ARMY AT THE GRAND REVIEW AT KRESNOE-SELO.

On the left, distinguishable by his white beard, is General Bilderling, in conversation with the Grand Duke Vladimir, in the center. Facing them, on the right, is General Obrontcheff, recently retired from the command of the army.

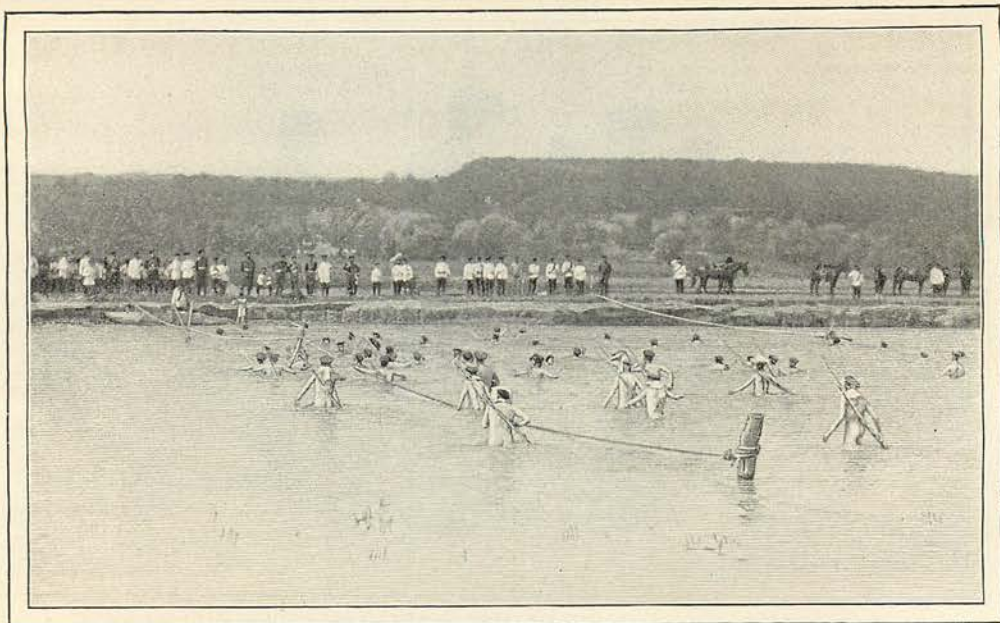
the railroad would contribute to the welfare and benefit of the people of Russia.

The construction of the Siberian railway is under the supervision of one of the most remarkable men in Europe, Prince Khilkoff. Some twenty years ago Prince Khilkoff had a misunderstanding with his father, and declared that he would not receive any further assistance from his estate. He came to America and sought occupation. He found a humble position in a machine-shop in Philadelphia, and was first set to making bolts in a car factory. By his devotion to his work and by his intelligence and acquired skill, he passed through all the stages of that industry until he became superintendent of the establishment. He at one time ran a locomotive on the Pennsylvania Central Railroad, and in time acquired a thorough knowledge, not only of the construction and material of railroad appliances, but also of the mode of constructing and managing such systems of transportation. He at length returned to Russia, obtained a position in one of the great establishments of that country, and finally worked his way up to the responsible post of Minister of Public Works for the Russian Empire, which office he still holds. Prince Khilkoff speaks English perfectly, looks like an American, and is one of the brightest and strongest men I met during my journey. Two years ago he passed over the

line of the Siberian railroad, and, crossing from Japan to San Francisco, traversed our country to New York, and so returned to St. Petersburg.

FIRST VISIT TO KRESNOE-SELO.

It was just after my visit to Peterhof that I went to Kresnoe-Selo to see the manœuvres of the Russian army. Kresnoe-Selo, or "Red Village," is situated about fifteen or twenty miles from St. Petersburg. Here annually a large camp is formed and manœuvres are carried out. There are more extended manœuvres in other sections of Russia: for example, they occur on a very extensive scale each year in Poland; but those I have understood are never witnessed by foreigners. Kresnoe-Selo is a very pretty village. It was purchased by the government as a field for manœuvres sixty years ago, and has gradually been improved until now it is admirably adapted to the purpose. There are barracks for the soldiers, hospitals for the sick, buildings for the officers, a special pavilion for the Emperor, with other suitable buildings for the Imperial family, a building in which the Emperor's mess is established, and quarters for the entertainment of guests who annually witness the evolutions. This camp is not occupied all the year round, as the English camp at



MANEUVERS OF RUSSIAN SOLDIERS—THE PASSAGE OF A RIVER.

From a photograph by De Jongh Frères, Paris.

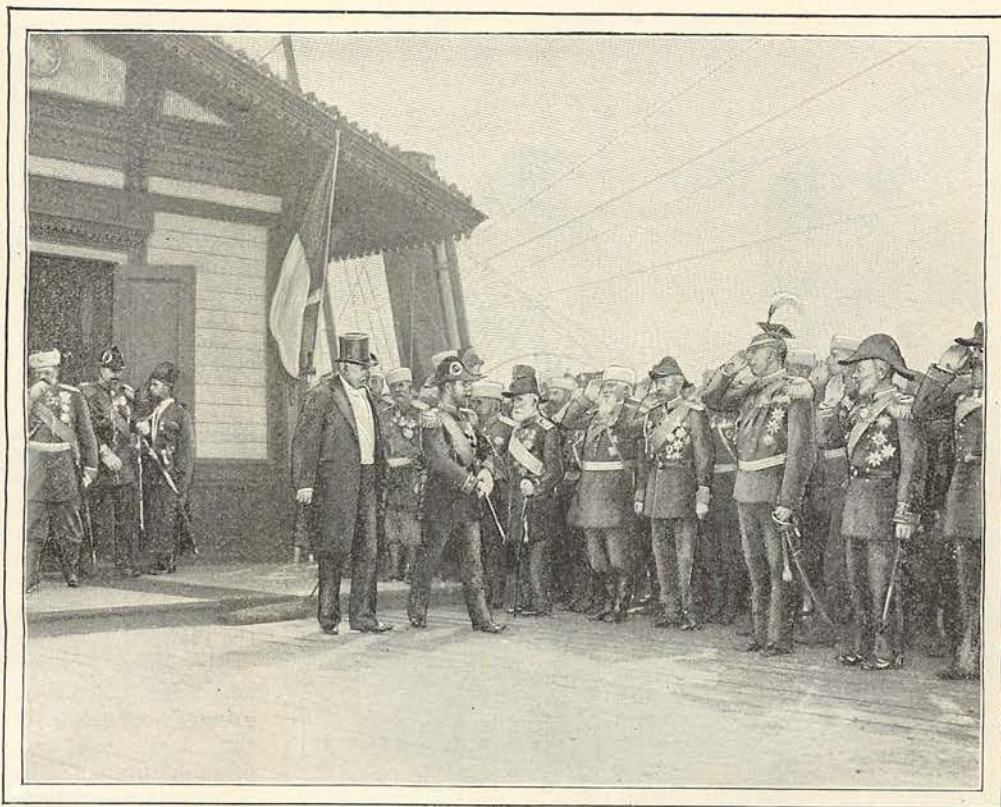
Aldershot, but after the exercises have been completed the troops retire to their stations.

The grand manœuvres began on the 21st, the troops engaged being those of the Grand Corps, in all about 35,000 to 40,000 men, divided into two corps. One corps, operating from the north, was slightly weaker than the other, but expected reinforcements from the railroad by way of Finland. The object of the southern force was to prevent the arrival of the reinforcements. It was a beautiful country for such a manœuver, and the place where we were to rendezvous and whither the Emperor was to repair was on a high point from which one could see the country for miles around. This was the key of the position for which a struggle was made by the southern force.

The use of cavalry as practiced in the Russian army was well shown here, as a large force with several horse-batteries was rapidly sent forward to dismount and occupy the hill and to hold it until the infantry forces from the north, coming down in two large columns, should arrive. The movement was well executed. The batteries had just been placed in position when the advance of the southern force was seen approaching, the forces proceeding in long columns covered by cavalry, while away to the front patrols could be seen moving. The northern army having occupied its lines

of battle, the cavalry moved off to its left. Shortly afterwards the cavalry of the south could be seen rapidly approaching; then a charge was made, the two cavalry columns meeting. It was exceedingly interesting. The result was the defeat of the northern cavalry, which retired and reformed some distance to the rear. Heavy artillery firing now commenced from the south. It was kept up for a long time, and was such as in actual war would have been very severe. It was replied to by a number of batteries well stationed along the line of the defence. The attack was made by the southern force in regular order, line after line advancing to the attack, well supported according to the modern attack formation. The fire was very intense. It was kept up all along the line for perhaps an hour, until at last the force made a charge, each line passing through the other, when the recall was sounded. The final result of the manœuvres was not published, but in all probability the northern forces would have been successful in resisting the attack made upon them.

The Emperor, who is a most active and energetic man, evinced great personal interest in all the manœuvres and exercises of the troops during the encampment, and made his headquarters at the camp during the entire time. He was present each day, and witnessed carefully each movement. Each



ARRIVAL OF PRESIDENT FAURE AT CRONSTADT TO VISIT THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA, AUGUST 23, 1897.

The Emperor is presenting his generals, aides-de-camp, and admirals to the President of France. The Grand Dukes Vladimir and Alexis are seen standing in the doorway on the left. In the center are President Faure and the Emperor Nicholas, and just beside the Emperor, leaning on his sword, is Admiral Tchikalcheff.

day notifications were given as to the manner of dress and the exact hour and point of rendezvous. The Grand Duke Vladimir ordered the general plan of operations day by day, but great latitude was left to commanding officers, and they were invited, as is the custom in foreign armies, to show originality and energy in carrying out their special movements. The successful handling of troops was a matter of especial commendation by the Emperor, whose desire appeared to be to give his officers that experience which would fit them for command in actual war.

Just after the manœuvres ended I had an opportunity to see a most imposing review of the Russian troops, held in honor of President Faure, of the French Republic. The French President reached Cronstadt, the harbor of St. Petersburg, on the morning of August 23d. Here the Emperor and his suite met him and conducted him to Peterhof, where in the evening a grand banquet was given. The next day the entire com-

pany at Peterhof went to St. Petersburg, where a wildly enthusiastic popular reception was accorded the distinguished visitor. The most exacting Frenchman could not have demanded more. One could not but contrast this demonstration over the visit of the French President with the mission and reception of the great Corsican some eighty-five years before, and marvel at the rapidity with which the events of the past are forgotten when the interests of the present and welfare of the future are before a people or government.

The review took place at Kresnoe-Selo, the Emperor and the Empress, with the President and their other guests, going to the field by rail. On arriving, the royal party repaired at once to what was called the Tribune of Honor, a great artificial mound built up at one side of the field and covered with sod. On it was erected a tent for their convenience. From this stand the President and the Empress watched the review. The Emperor and the grand dukes and the mili-



EMPEROR WILLIAM OF GERMANY AND EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH OF AUSTRIA.

From a photograph by Strelisky, Budapest.

tary representatives of other powers were ranged in line at the base of the Tribune. The review was one of the finest military displays I have ever witnessed. An interesting feature of the review was the way in which the Emperor expressed his satisfaction. If a regiment pleased him he called out in a strong voice: "Well done, my men;" and immediately the troops to whom the remark was addressed answered, as if in one voice: "We are glad to do our best for Your Majesty." The most dramatic incident which occurred was the passing in front of the Tribune of Honor of Prince Louis Napoleon, at the head of his company of Russian troops, the Czar and the President both graciously acknowledging his salute as he passed.

From the observations of the Russian army which I was able to make at the review at Kresnoe-Selo, and during the manœuvres, I concluded that it is exceedingly well equipped, well disciplined, and well armed for any purpose, and that its officers are skilled and

accomplished. Most of the officers belong to the aristocracy, and are highly educated. They are the best military linguists in Europe. The Grand Duke Vladimir is an ideal field marshal and a very able general, and in him evidently the Emperor has great confidence. The Grand Duke Alexier is the head of the Navy Department. In my conversation with him, he referred with great pleasure to his visit and entertainment in our country, and to the famous hunts in which he took part on the Plains.

The Russian army is, I think, capable of greater endurance in the field than any other in Europe. The infantry and artillery are composed of strong, hardy men, and the cavalry are unexcelled. The Cossacks constitute perhaps the best of the

mounted troops. The horses are strong, hardy, and well fitted for the hardships and fatigues that campaigns require. In fact, the Russian horses, I believe, are the best in the world. The Russian people take better care of their horses than any people I have ever known. They are strong, well fed, and full of spirit, and not mutilated in the cruel manner in which we find them in too many other countries of Europe and in our own country. In Russia it is considered bad form for a driver to carry a whip, and I never saw during my stay there a horse that appeared to be ill treated or ill fed.

Every man in Russia is liable to military service from his twenty-first year. Nearly 900,000 reach this age every year in the empire, and of these about 275,000 are taken into the active army. The best are placed in the reserve, which is of two classes. Those in the active army serve five years, and those in the reserve serve one, three, and five, according to the class. These



EMPEROR WILLIAM OF GERMANY AND KING HUMBERT OF ITALY.

From a photograph by Jacobi, Metz.

latter drill six weeks twice a year. These are the periods in European Russia; they differ somewhat in Asia and Caucasia. The total peace footing of the army, including "all the Russians"—that is, Russia in Europe, Siberia, Turkistan and Finland—amounts, according to the latest figures, to 33,529 officers, 835,143 men, 155,478 horses. The actual war footing is more difficult to ascertain; but, according to the most conservative estimate, it is probable that Russia could, in case of war, mobilize with tolerable ease in first line of battle an army of at least 1,355,000 men, with a reserve of about 1,100,000. That is, she would have at her command a force of 2,455,000, with perhaps 55,000 officers and a half million horses. If one considers the efficiency of the troops and the officers, something of the military strength of the empire is realized.

THE GERMAN MANŒUVERS.

From St. Petersburg I went to Berlin, where I had my first look at the German

troops. This was at a review of the Guard Corps, undoubtedly the best corps of the German army, by the Emperor and Empress. At the close of the ceremony, I was presented to the Emperor. His Majesty, drilled from boyhood in military duties, is a thorough soldier and an intense enthusiast in military matters. The Empress, mounted on a splendid charger, presented a very beautiful appearance in her three-cornered chapeau and the bright white uniform of her regiment. She seemed to have the devotion and affection of the army quite as much as the sovereign.

From Berlin I went to Homburg, whither I had been invited to witness the grand manœuvres of the German army. These manœuvres took place a little way from the town, the principal territory manœvered over being that to the east, in the vicinity of Hanau and Frankfort. The Emperor had his headquarters at Homburg. The Duke of Cambridge was there, and was present at a great review of the Eleventh Army Corps which took place on the 4th of September,

on which occasion the troops presented a most magnificent appearance. There were present at this review, in addition to the Emperor and Empress; the Grand Duchess of Hesse, the honorary colonel of one of the regiments; and King Humbert and Queen Margareta of Italy.

The corps was about 33,000 strong, one of the largest in the German army. It was interesting to see the King of Italy, who was honorary colonel of one of the regiments, take his place at the head of the regiment and pass in review before the Emperor. The Grand Duchess of Hesse also passed in review at the head of her regiment. The Emperor left the stand twice, and took command of regiments of which he was honorary colonel, leaving the King of Italy on the reviewing stand to pass these regiments in review. Twice they passed, once in column of companies, batteries, and squadrons; again in line of battalions, the cavalry and artillery at a gallop, in perfect order, presenting a magnificent appearance. That night, as well as after the review at Berlin, we were all entertained by the Emperor at a state dinner. A speech was made by Emperor William, full of kindly feeling for Italy, and a reply was made by King Humbert, with equally friendly expressions, from which it was evident that the Triple Alliance was still in strong force. The manœuvres began on the 6th of September, and ended on the 10th. They were the most extensive ever held in Germany in time of peace. There were 117,000 men in all engaged. This force was about four times as great as that at Kresnoe-Selo, and about 50,000 larger than that at the French manœuvres which, in part, I witnessed later. The labor of organizing, equipping, transporting, and supplying such an army must have been immense. All of this had been worked out by the general staff of Germany, and maps had been provided which were models in themselves, by which, from day to day, the movements of the troops could be seen and followed with great ease.

The great problem in the German manœuvres was to bring a great army into the field and operate against an invading army which had crossed the Rhine from the west. For the purpose the forces were divided into two armies. The western, or invading army, was represented by a portion of the troops under General Count Von Haesler; while the eastern, or army of defense, was commanded by Prince Leopold of Bavaria, the two being nearly equal in strength. The western army was composed of Prussians, while Prince Leopold's army was composed

of Bavarians. We were provided with horses and orderlies, and proceeded each day by train near to the field of action, where, following the Emperor, we witnessed the manœuvres. Many miles were covered by the troops, and it was necessary to ride long distances to see the action. The use of troops of all the branches was exemplified. The various modes of attack and defense in modern warfare were shown. Long and weary marches were made by the troops in accomplishing all of this. Much of the time it rained, and it was far from easy service. In fact, except for the danger of war, perhaps the troops suffered as much hardship as they would in actual campaign, and yet they seemed well supplied, and there were few accidents. There were some losses; several men were drowned in crossing streams, in which the use of the pontoon bridge was shown. Some were taken sick, but comparatively few died, probably sixty in all, out of this immense army, which indeed was a remarkably small percentage under any circumstances.

In watching the combats in the German manœuvres, I was much interested in the effect of the smokeless powder. One heard the sound of the cannon and the rattle of musketry, but saw nothing until the troops advanced or retreated across the country within his line of vision. A valuable means of judging of the whereabouts of an enemy and of the progress of a battle is taken from a commanding officer by the use of smokeless powder.

Extensive use was made of military balloons in the German manœuvres for observation purposes, and the opposing armies were provided each with one or more, constantly in use. The familiar pear-shaped balloon was used, and, in addition, the "dragon" balloon. This is very different in form, and is constructed to avoid the constant whirling and spinning motion which is had with the ordinary shape. It is stated that there is considerable steadiness in the new form, and consequently it is naturally better suited for observation. Telephone lines connect these balloons with operators below, thus enabling the observers to communicate rapidly. The Russians also used the balloon in their manœuvres, and one of the features of their review in honor of President Faure was the launching of a balloon bearing in mammoth letters the words "La France." The familiar spherical balloon was used by them.

I was very much impressed at the manœuvres with the excellent training of the



KING HUMBERT'S REGIMENT OF GERMAN HUSSARS, DISMOUNTED.

From a photograph by Jacobi, Metz.

German soldiers. Young men in Germany are compelled to enlist at twenty and serve two years in the active army, and then serve a portion of the following five years in the reserve. After one generation, the whole male population of Germany becomes a great military force. The severe drill and discipline enforced in the German army makes thorough soldiers of the young men, and in some respects is a good school of practice, either for war or peace. It compels respect to superiors. It enforces regular habits, cleanliness, sobriety, and simplicity and regularity in daily labor and habits of life. It lifts up the awkward, listless, and careless boy to the position of manhood in the promotion of physical strength. Yet the rigid discipline appears to some extent distasteful, and I noticed very few veterans among the soldiers.

FRENCH MANŒUVERS.

Leaving Homburg, I hastened to Paris, in order to see as much as possible of the French manœuvres, which had commenced some days before. General Porter, our ambassador in Paris, had already kindly arranged for permission for me to witness these manœuvres.

They were held at St. Quentin, about ninety miles from Paris to the north, and they took place in the same country in which the campaign of the north in the war of 1870-71 had been fought. The general idea of these troops was to illustrate the methods that would be taken to resist an invading army under circumstances similar to those that obtained during this war. St. Quentin was the scene of the decisive battle fought in January, 1871, and there again a conflict was now about to take place between the two contending armies. In the real battle the French were badly defeated. This destroyed the hope that the French army which was then held in Paris might join with the army then operating in the north. The troops engaged in the manœuvres were about the same in number, 75,000, as those who took part in the battle.

I was much impressed with the discipline of the French troops. Their dispositions for attack and defense seemed to be characterized by exceedingly good judgment and ability. There was much spirit and earnestness shown by both officers and men, and the manœuvres must have been of much benefit to the French army. Tents were not used

at all by the French army. The troops were all billeted in villages, which, being so numerous in France, were sufficient to accommodate large numbers. A similar arrangement is made in Germany, although the troops are supplied with shelter tents, which are made of pieces, as in our country, and which can be put together, but while our tents only accommodate two men, each man carrying a half, in the German army a large number of men can be supplied by putting together a number of pieces.

On the 14th of September a grand review of the entire army, some 70,000 men, was held by the President of the Republic, accompanied by the King of Siam and the heads of the Departments of the French Government. Certainly the discipline and efficiency of the army, as displayed in this review, are of the first order. The entire army passed the Tribune in less than two hours, and the cavalry charged past at a gallop, followed by the infantry and artillery, together with the bicycle corps, transportation, balloon carriage, engineer, and pontoon trains. While this was being done, the cavalry, numbering 12,000 men, massed on the opposite side of the field, and at a given signal charged across the field in one solid body, and halted within two hundred yards of the President in perfect line, showing the highest discipline, drill, and efficiency.

The bicycle corps at this review attracted particular attention. It was much used during the manœuvres of this as well as in those of the preceding year. Experiments and tests were made in order to determine its adaptability for war purposes. The strength of the company was about one hundred men. The men are provided with a folding wheel, which can be placed upon the back and carried with ease. It is stated that it only takes fifty seconds to put the wheel in place, and about thirty seconds to unfold it for a mount. The military wheelman wears the ordinary soldier's uniform, but is provided with a pair of leggins. He carries the rifle, and, in addition, the usual repair kit, etc. The roads in France are ideal ones for the use of the bicycle. The French claim that the experiments which they have made with the bicycle prove its value, and that the bicyclists would be very useful in operating with cavalry and horse batteries and for reconnoitering purposes. The great advantage of rapidity and silence of movement are important points in their favor. In the manœuvres of 1896 it was noticed that cavalry advancing with the greatest care could be heard and observed

much sooner than wheelmen. The company of bicyclists in the manœuvres of that year was termed the "phantom company," because it so unexpectedly appeared before the enemy.

I noticed the bicyclists at all the reviews I saw, though not in so large a body as in the French army. In the German army they are attached to all the staffs as couriers and, in small numbers, to almost every battalion, where they are used as scouts and patrols. In fact, the value of the wheel to an army is beginning to be recognized everywhere. Whoever first places 25,000 or 50,000 men on bicycles in the next war will have a decided advantage over his opponent, and perhaps compel him to resort to the same tactics.

Not the least interesting feature of my visit to St. Quentin was meeting President Faure, whom, as I have already said, I had seen in Russia, on the occasion of the French fête. The French President is one of the most courtly, dignified, and accomplished men that I met among the heads of any of the governments of Europe, and he was surrounded by a very able cabinet of intelligent, progressive men. At no place that I visited was there manifested a more cordial sentiment toward the American Government and people than by the people of France. When we recall the fact that they came to our assistance and aided us in establishing our independence; that they have since the days of Lafayette been our warm sympathizers, friends, and allies, and have given expression to this sentiment in many ways, not the least of which is that great monument that now adorns the entrance to the harbor of our great metropolis, we should certainly be an ungrateful people if we did not in every way possible reciprocate their friendship and generosity. Moreover, the French people are certainly entitled to great consideration from Americans from the fact that they have maintained in the heart of Europe a liberal government similar to our own, against the prejudices of their surrounding neighbors. It would be eminently fitting for our Government, in making an appropriation for the French Exposition of 1900, not only to provide for the buildings and accommodation of the great exhibit that this country will make and which will contribute greatly to the prosperity and wealth of our own people, but to arrange for the erection of some permanent structure as an indication of our gratitude for the benefits that we have received in the past from the French people.