

## THE JAPANESE ARMY.

There has recently been published by a French military writer an elaborate statement upon the Russian and Japanese armies opposed to each other during the late war, and upon the great project of military reorganisation upon which Japan has entered as the result of that struggle. The facts are based upon official information secured by the French General Staff and laid before the Committee of the French Chamber on the Army Budget.

At the beginning of 1904, the Japanese Army with the colours was composed of twelve divisions of the Line and one of Guards. Each of these divisions consisted of twelve battalions, three squadrons of horse, six batteries of six guns, and three companies of engineers. There were besides, as independent units, two brigades of cavalry (16 squadrons) and two so-called brigades of artillery, with 216 guns. Moreover, there were supposed to be called up for each division on mobilisation, one infantry brigade of six battalions, one squadron of horse, and one battery. These reserve units were found, however, when the crisis came, to have little existence except on paper, especially as to the cavalry and artillery. Indeed, with the resources then available, great difficulty was experienced in placing the active units upon a complete war footing. As a fact, the mobilisation of these latter was only effected by degrees as the campaign progressed.

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In August, 1904, that is to say, six months after hostilities had begun, there had only been mobilised ten divisions and an equal number of reserve brigades of infantry. Owing to the necessity of keeping an army before Port Arthur, Marshal Oyama was not able to put more than 135,000 men into action at Liao-Yang against 150,000 Russians, and in the battle of the Sha-Ho, six weeks later, the disparity of numbers told still more seriously against Japan—140,000 against 180,000. The suspension of hostilities during the ensuing winter enabled Japan to complete the mobilisation of the active units, and to organise some reserve corps. When her forces again assumed the offensive, they had thirteen complete divisions and fifteen reserve brigades. Making allowance for detachments held in Corea, the fall of Port Arthur enabled Marshal Oyama to dispose of 235,000 men for the attack on Mukden, which was defended by 300,000 Russians. Both armies were still farther augmented during the breathing time that followed this great engagement, and in August, when peace was concluded, Japan had 650,000 men in the field to make head against 900,000 Russians. These figures explain why it was that Russia emerged from defeat upon such comparatively easy terms, but they also afford a striking demonstration of how much can be achieved against heavy odds by superior organisation and command.

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The Mikado's Government set resolutely to work almost the first day after the peace to remedy the defects which the strain of war had brought to light. The great truth had been brought home that while men may be drilled, the organising of great units while a campaign is in progress involves enormous risk as well as enormous difficulty, and it was determined so to broaden the permanent organisation of the Army as to render anything of the kind unnecessary in the future. In Japan there will be no more improvisations in war time. Eight new divisions were promptly ordered to be added to the permanent Army, but as four of these had been formed during the war, they were retained at full strength in Manchuria and Corea after the thirteen original divisions had been sent home on a peace footing, and as they were the last to be withdrawn, they are to all intents and purposes already assimilated into the military system. In reality, therefore, only four more divisions remain to be organised, and this work is now well in hand. When the reconstruction is complete, twenty of the twenty-one divisions will be linked in couples to form corps d'armée on the European model, the Guards division being the only independent unit left. On mobilisation, each of the divisions will have a reserve brigade of from eight to twelve battalions. Besides this, the

vital importance has been grasped of a cavalry adequate in numbers and of proper quality, and this branch of the Service is being remodelled with energy. A great impulse is being given to the remount department, and strong encouragements are now offered to horse-breeding.

The recruiting laws are also being revised. In theory, every adult male should pass three years with the colours, but financial considerations keep the peace effective down to about 200,000 men, and while each year's draft should yield about 400,000 men, only about 70,000 are ever incorporated, so that the numbers actually passing into the reserve, active, and territorial are small. To augment these numbers, without laying too heavy a strain upon the finances of the country, a Bill has been drafted for introducing the system of two years' service, and in this way to bring up the annual contingent to adequate proportions. It should be understood, also, that the military policy of Japan is characterised as much by continuity as by energy.

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## BLINKERS UNNECESSARY.

The Secretary of the Anti-Bearing Rein Association draws out attention to an announcement made in the Berlin "Tierschutz-Korrespondenz" that a recent Ministerial Order prohibiting the use of blinkers on the horses of public conveyances in Berlin has worked very well. The Union of "Droschky" proprietors petitioned against it, fearing that it would throw out of use a number of valuable horses. With the exception, however, of a few cases, in which the Chief of the Police permits the continued use of blinkers, the reform has been carried out with perfect success; and we are told that there are now some 7,000 horses at work without this article of harness, which is not only unnecessary, but is also a cause of disease and of accidents.

## A QUEEN'S CORRESPONDENCE.

The promised volumes of Queen Victoria's letters are awaited with much interest. The fact that the King has supervised them need not be taken as evidence that there will be any suppression of letters which the public might reasonably expect to find. The fact that Queen Victoria's frankly worded letters over the deaths of the Prince Imperial and General Gordon have already gone into print indicates the possibility of some further plain speaking. The Queen was careful of her correspondence, even in small things. When one of her favourite ministers at Balmoral died, she, having corresponded freely with him over the details of the Balmoral improvements, caused all letters giving figures to be returned to her.

There is a gleam of humour in Mr. Morley's prefatory note to his Life of Gladstone. When he applied to the King for permission to use certain documents his Majesty generously lent his valuable assistance. So did Queen Victoria, when permission lay with her. But she added, the author tells us, a message strongly impressing upon him that the work should not be handled in the narrow way of party. Her letters concerning Gladstone and Palmerston should make piquant reading. Upon both she kept a pretty tight hand. Gladstone got into hot water for going to Denmark when he was Premier, and also for making speeches outside his own constituency while holding the same office. That is only one-and-twenty years ago. It would probably bring a smile to the face of King Edward were it suggested to him today that he should define the geographical limits beyond which Mr. Balfour or Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman should not go campaigning.

For one letter in the Queen's correspondence the curious will look with interest. Did she notice and comment upon the trick which Palmerston played one night upon her at Balmoral? "Pam" was the Minister in attendance, and as such, unless royalty or some State dignitary higher than himself were present, should have taken the seat at dinner next the left hand of the Queen. But on this night he was in one of his fractious moods. There was the seat for the Minister, but there was no Minister to fill it. "Pam" had popped into the seat reserved for the minister of the local church, leaving that gentleman horrified at the prospect of having to sit next to the Queen. There was a moment or two of dreadful embarrassment; then Lady Churchill, with a presence of mind which would have done credit to a general, slipped into the chair next that of the Queen, and motioned to the clergyman to take the seat which had been reserved for herself. "Pam" ate his dinner without comment or apology, enjoying it the better, perhaps, because of the success of his schoolboy trick.

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### FATHER OF THE POOR.

At a certain point of Paris near the Halles there is every morning to be seen an instance for which it would probably be difficult to find many parallels of that benevolence which combines with money expenditure the element of personal service. The *Newcastle Chronicle* states that an old gentleman, well dressed, presents himself at an hour now well known by those concerned, and there distributes with his own hands a hundred large bowls of bouillon or soup, which he first tastes himself, to as many poor people who, it need hardly be added, are there waiting for him. Then he withdraws, walks for some distance, and is taken up in a fine motor car, which whisks him rapidly away. "The Father of the Poor" is the only name which can be given to him.

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## DETERMINATION IN SUICIDE.

Another determined suicide out of the beaten track of things so dismal is reported in Paris. A man named Bayard had been an in-patient of one of the hospitals for three months, and his condition had been getting worse rather than better. A few nights ago the man was found on the floor with a cord round his neck, and as he had clearly been trying to commit suicide a man was told off to watch him—and to watch in vain. Somehow Bayard had managed to get possession of a knife, and while the guard's attention was diverted for a few minutes he got his head well under the bed-clothes, and on their being lifted in a few minutes the man's head was almost severed from the body.