

**THE NATION IN ARMS; A
TREATISE ON MODERN
MILITARY SYSTEMS AND
THE CONDUCT OF WAR**

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The Nation in Arms; A Treatise on Modern Military Systems and the Conduct of War by
Colmar von der Goltz & Philip A. Ashworth & A. Hilliard Atteridge

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**COLMAR VON DER GOLTZ & PHILIP A.
ASHWORTH & A. HILLIARD ATTERIDGE**

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THE NATION IN ARMS

A TREATISE ON
MODERN MILITARY SYSTEMS
AND THE CONDUCT OF WAR

BY
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TRANSLATED BY
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A. HILLIARD ATTERIDGE

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PREFACE

GENERAL VON DER GOLTZ, now acting as German Governor of Belgium, is one of the most distinguished military writers of our time. He has been styled "the most eminent pupil of Von Moltke." He served in the war against France in 1870, and afterwards spent some years in Turkey as the instructor of the Ottoman Army. He was the author of a plan of campaign which gave victory to the Sultan's troops in the war against Greece in 1897. In the war against Bulgaria and the Balkan League the Turkish commanders abandoned the plan for a defensive campaign which he had prepared, and the rejection of his advice had disastrous results. The commanders who did best during the campaign in Thrace were his pupils.

General Von der Goltz's work, "The Nation in Arms," describes the conduct of war in a European country by an army organised on the basis of universal military service. The special interest of the book arises from the fact that it is not a mere collection of essays on the great principles of war, but descends to details and deals with these in an eminently practical and realistic way. The author draws freely on his own experiences of the great war in France. He presents vivid pictures of certain aspects of war that are often overlooked by the mere theorist. Thus, for instance, we have a wonderfully interesting account of the effects of the wear and tear of campaigning on even the best troops. The description of the condition to which the German armies in France were reduced after six or seven months of victorious campaigning presents us with an aspect of war that is left out of sight in

Government bulletins and official histories. So, too, in his detailed study of the problems of supplying an army in the field with food and ammunition and replacing casualties, he shows us how the difficulties of carrying on a campaign increase with every forward step and with every month that the war lasts. These are points that one must understand if one is to form any accurate judgment of the course of the present war. One realises that severe as is the strain of battle, the task of maintaining an army in existence is even more trying for those who have to conduct the wars of "a nation in arms." General Von der Goltz writes as a patriotic German, but there is in his works a complete absence of the "Jingo element" to be found in some of the younger writers of the German army. He argues that universal service is the necessary price that a great Continental nation must pay to secure its safety, but he never expresses the strange opinion that war is something to be sought for its own sake. To his mind it is rather a trying experience that will come from time to time in the life of a nation, and for which the most complete preparation must be made.

The book is a long one. In the present edition it has been brought within smaller limits by omitting here and there dissertations on minor points and a number of the numerous examples with which the author illustrates his argument. But care has been taken to omit no really significant detail and to keep all those interesting personal records of war experience which are not the least valuable part of General Von der Goltz's work.

A. H. A.

October 7, 1914

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