

Moltke. By Lieut.-Colonel F. E. WHITTON, C.M.G. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1921.—xi, 319 pp.

To weave into one pattern the personal, political and military phases of a life so long prominent as that of Moltke, and so long identified not only with Prussian and German but with international history, is a difficult task. Success requires a wide and exact familiarity with the history of the time, and a careful apportionment of space and emphasis. The reader of the biography wants, not only a study of the military strategy and operations of the Danish War, the Austro-Prussian War, and the Franco-German War, but, in their proper perspective, a grasp of the political and diplomatic background and a vivid likeness of the personality and character of the central figure.

Colonel Whitton has scored a marked success in this one-volume life of von Moltke. Although the book may not attract as much attention as some other volumes of the series in which it appears (*Makers of the Nineteenth Century*), as Lord Charnwood's *Lincoln* and Cook's *Delane* of *The Times*, it is a sound, well-balanced and well-written piece of work, reflecting credit upon its author.

On the personal side, the reader is given from time to time intimate glimpses through extracts from personal correspondence of a tender, even of a sentimental, side which is seldom associated with the thought of the grim, taciturn Chief of Staff of the German army. His deep and abiding affection for his mother and his love for his wife, his attention to his personal affairs, reflected in his letters, are brought forcibly to the reader's attention on occasions where the biographer might easily have yielded to the temptation to spend all his available space upon the details of a campaign. At the crowning point of success in the Franco-German War, Moltke writes: "If only Marie had lived to see these times." Less than a week after the fall of Metz he sends home a long letter, two-thirds of which is devoted to minute inquiry and instructions about his country estate. His charity toward the vanquished is shown by an exclamation after the Austro-Prussian War: "A vanquished commander! oh! if outsiders could form but a faint conception of what that means! . . . A general, too, so deserving, so brave, and so cautious." The deep personal belief in a peculiarly German God, so evident in all the prominent leaders in German history, is inherent in Moltke, as in his note after Königgrätz: "God's omnipotence led on our banner to victory; He alone lent strength to our army."

The biographer is not blind to von Moltke's deficiencies: indeed, he gives us the impression of being just and clear-sighted. He criticizes especially von Moltke's writing, as in commenting upon von Moltke's history of the Danish War of 1848-1850: "the volume is without any marked literary grace . . . a disappointing feature of the book is the absence of a wide critical survey of the strategic aspect of the war . . ." (p. 62). And again, after calling attention to the deficiencies of the Intelligence Service and of the handling of the cavalry arm in 1866, the biographer notes: "It may without unfairness be urged that the unready state of an important department, and the faulty handling of an arm which is the most important one at the opening of a war, do, in some measure, reflect on the Chief of Staff who had been the virtual commander of the Prussian army since 1858" (p. 122). It may be remarked in passing that this ignorance of the function and handling of the cavalry arm was common to all Europe in 1866, and need not have been debited especially to von Moltke.

Somewhat less attention than the reader may expect is paid to political background, and to accompanying political and diplomatic developments during the active career of von Moltke. Some of the statements in Colonel Whitton's general background are inaccurate and misleading; for example, on page 3 he speaks of Prussian iniquity in her eighteenth-century wars including "three robberies of Poland"; again, he gives an impression of Frederick William III as a vigorous and resolute monarch, pages 6 and 19. In the accompanying political and diplomatic developments, the influence and prominence of Bismarck might well have been further emphasized. As it is, the Prussian king is given credit (p. 63 and again p. 162) for decisions which were solely the result of Bismarck's advice and influence.

In the handling of the military part of the book there is an undercurrent of depreciation of the Germans, which is not sufficiently marked to mar the value of the work, but which could not have appeared in a study written before the late war. There is a little overemphasis on the modern note of apology for the blunders of France in the campaign of 1870. More than once in showing the French estimate of the situations which arose from the war, the author states that the military leaders of the Empire had their fingers on the key, which, if pressed, would have inaugurated victory. A genuine regard for the truth of history, however, compels him to show with what unflinching accuracy they pressed the wrong key.

The discussions of the campaigns offer no marked deviations from the best criticisms of the wars which Moltke conducted. Colonel Whitton has had the benefit of Marshal Foch's comments on the subject and has used them to advantage. Wisely, however, he refuses to commit himself with the Marshal in the matter of the French and German schools of strategy, and takes the view that the determining struggle between the two has not been fought. The success of Gravelotte, the author says, is credited to the German school by only a narrow margin; but he adds that the first Marne was a French victory by a very similar fall of the dice.

The most serious criticism to be made of these chapters is that when the troops begin to move, the individuals are lost sight of in the mass. Battles are won as a game is played. Battalions move like pawns on the board. But only once or twice, and then faintly, do we catch a glimpse of the man who is playing the game and moving the counters. Mr. Williams, in his Editor's Preface, points to the difficulty of portraying the human Moltke. We did not expect that. But we did want the un-human one. We looked for something to show us that Brain, which was Moltke, that lay behind the German successes—something which would show us that Will at work. For even with an intellect such as his, those momentous decisions were the result of effort. The orders which achieved victory came from a human mind, and not a printing-press; and if we could not have the Chief of Staff, we wanted at least that impersonation of force which was Helmuth von Moltke.

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WEST POINT

Out of My Life. By MARSHAL VON HINDENBURG. Translated by F. A. Holt. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1921.—Two volumes. x, 267; 296 pp.

These volumes inevitably suggest a comparison with the memoirs of General Ludendorff, and it may be said at once that the field-marshal's reputation is as much enhanced by his autobiography as that of his quartermaster-general was lowered by his *apologia*. The colossal arrogance and sustained ferocity which make Ludendorff's book so distasteful are refreshingly absent; instead, Hindenburg has