1849

War
WAR.

"O, there are fires in every breast,
In peace, we never know;
They die, in days of sunny rest—
In war, they only glow."

Until the moral condition of the world is changed—until the benign influence of Christianity shall have ameliorated the character of nations, and international laws and transactions be founded in righteousness, it must needs be, that wars will come. Hence, every wise government will appropriate all the means that science and skill can contribute, to lessen the awful consequences of this deadly conflict of nations, though it may not be prevented.

To accomplish this great result, the mathematical science has done almost everything. This science, that gave to Christopher Columbus his chart and compass, if not inspiration, to discover, under the guidance of Providence, a New World—that gave to the mariner his nautical skill, and has constructed the profound, yet beautiful machinery of commerce—has produced a mighty revolution in the mode of warfare. It has changed the ancient custom of barbarous cruelty to a system of science and skill. It laid hold upon the data furnished by the invention of gunpowder and the elementary principles of warfare, and constructed a profound science, called the "Science of War and Fortification." "Now, nations take up arms, not until after cool reflections, and carry on their hostilities with so little rancor or animosity, comparatively, that war amongst them is disarmed of half its terrors."

This science has elicited the genius and labors of the greatest military men. The celebrity of Vauban, Turenne, Deville, Cohorn, Saxe, Marlborough, and of Washington, was found more on science and philosophy than on the results of battles. According to their system, the greatest results are not obtained by the tremendous battle, and the slaughter of twenty or thirty thousand men, but by scientific manoeuvring and skilful operations; either by well selected lines of operations, or the genius of the tactician upon the battle-field. Their system embraces humanity and the physico-mathematical science. With a Vauban, or a Washington, the crossing of the Bridge Lodi, with the sacrifice of ten thousand of brave, youthful soldiers, would not be a victory.

Hence, it was by this "Science of War and Fortification," that Washington baffled the greatest efforts of Lord Cornwallis within his fastness at Yorktown, Virginia, and compelled the British army, with very little loss on either side, to surrender on his own terms. This enabled the gallant General Scott to take his seat before the city of Vera Cruz and the impregnable walls of San Juan d'Ulloa, and, after a few days, with but very few killed and wounded, to silence their guns, and march into the city without opposition.