

THE PASSION FOR MILITARY GLORY IN FRANCE.

NOT within the memory of living men has France been the mistress of continental Europe; yet the memory of her military glory is still vivid among her people, and the expressions of many of her writers show that she has not given up the hope of regaining her proud preeminence. Her Government is, however, and has been for a long time, eminently pacific. For

instance, speaking of the unwillingness of France to interfere in the South African war merely for the sake of justice, M. Delcassé, the minister of foreign affairs, said:

"France has not ceased to be that generous nation which the world has known, has admired, and has sometimes left in the lurch; but France has had many bitter experiences, and altho she will not shirk her duty, she must consider the fact that the balance of power has altered, and that some consideration



COLONEL DE VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL.

Killed in an engagement with Lord Methuen last week.

is due to herself. France has lost none of her noble enthusiasm, but she also realizes that she can not and must not give way to her generous impulses. She has done enough for humanity, and can, without jealousy, allow others to take the initiative."

Despite this peaceful declaration, warlike articles are popular with the French public, and the idea of a war of revenge against Germany, tho less prominent than in former years, is still continually encountered in the French press. "Revenge for Sedan is a sentiment necessary to our national existence," writes Maurice Barrés in the *Journal* (Paris). "France will regain her equilibrium only when her territorial integrity has been restored," writes Joseph Reinach in the *Siècle*. The *Kölnische Zeitung* (Cologne) thinks that such expressions must be remembered. It says:

"It may be argued that the French nation has loved peace for a long time, and that war is not desired by the people in general. That may be true. The nation did not desire the wars of the First Empire; it did not wish for war at the time of the Crimean campaign; it would not have wanted the war of 1870, had the people been given two days' time for sober reflection. But the nation is not even asked its opinion; it is taken unawares. Ever since the great Revolution, French wars have been made by a few daring speculators, assisted by a 'patriotic' mob, which raises in the streets and in the newspapers a popular cry. Germany, for one, has no reason to relax her watchful attitude as long as the cry '*A Berlin*' has not died out entirely."

At present, the popular hero of the French is the late Colonel Villebois-Mareuil, the "South African Lafayette," an officer of undoubted ability, whose advice to the Boers has certainly influenced the war, and who has been described in the German as well as the French papers as the most capable of the foreign officers who assist the Boers. The *Epoca* (Madrid) says:

"Military glory is a necessity to France," said Napoleon III. after the Italian war, and he was more in accord with popular opinion then than when he declared, in his Bordeaux program, that 'imperial rule meant peace.' This passion for military glory is very catching. Nothing illustrates this better than the wild enthusiasm with which shopkeeping England received the news of General Roberts's successes, and the intolerance shown to the advocates of peace. What wonder that Paris should give herself up to illusions born of historical remembrances. The desire for military glory was at the bottom of the wars waged under the old Monarchy, and still more so during the time of Napoleon I. Again, under the Third Empire, the Napoleonic legend was revived; military glory was regarded as indispensable to France, and by military glory was meant the indisputable supremacy of France in Europe. The attempt failed, and it was not even a coalition then which broke up the power of France, for Prussia, assisted by portions of the ancient German empire, awakened France from her dream. But has the effect been lasting? We fear not. We believe it is necessary to point out, on the eve of the World's Exposition, that those who endeavor to revive the passion for military glory in the French are rendering a sorry service to France."—*Translations made for THE LITERARY DIGEST.*