

**WELLINGTON'S CAREER:
A MILITARY AND
POLITICAL SUMMARY**

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Wellington's Career: A Military and Political Summary by Edward Bruce Hamley

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BY

EDWARD BRUCE HAMLEY

CAPTAIN R.A., AND LIEUT.-COLONEL
PROFESSOR OF MILITARY HISTORY AND ART AT
THE STAFF COLLEGE

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P R E F A C E.

NUMEROUS excellent works descriptive of Wellington's military exploits have been given to the public, and the inquirer who seeks information on any particular phase of his career need be at no loss for ample materials on which to ground an opinion. But it is scarcely possible that works which afford these necessary and invaluable details should also present to the reader a clear outline of the subject in all its unity and simplicity. Lost in the mazes of the scene of campaign or the theatre of war, he fails to recognise, in the devious movements and shifting plans, the evidence of a presiding and controlling spirit; and it is not till, with much labour, he has succeeded in massing the minor incidents round their true centres that

he perceives the full scope and meaning of each series of operations with reference to the main design ; that, as a general reader, he can appreciate the grandeur of the mind which conceived and evolved them ; and that, as a military student, he can profitably seek in them for illustrations of the great principles of war.

The following sketch originally appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in the form of a review of the excellent *Life of Wellington* by M. Brialmont and Mr Gleig. It is now re-published, not with the idea of enabling the reader to dispense in any degree with historical works of reputation on the subject, but rather to induce a closer and more cordial, because more intelligent, study of them. The object has been to indicate comprehensively the great outlines of Wellington's career, and thus to render luminous those masses of details which, however well adapted to attract the interest of the reader, must also, in some degree, serve to perplex him. Certainly, a very large proportion of those who first enter on the subject with the aid of extensive works, however clear in treatment those works may be, must have fre-

quently found themselves obliged either to take for granted the merits of particular operations, or else to give renewed and close attention to the circumstances under which they were executed; while, even then, their full scope will sometimes remain unintelligible without some previous knowledge of the principles on which military designs should be formed. The following memoir, then, is again offered to the public, in the hope that it may be of service both to the military student by its reference to principles, and to the general reader by rendering those principles manifest without technicality.

Should it be favourably received, it may probably be followed by other attempts to elucidate military operations, and to supply the means of judging, with some exactness and confidence, of the plans and achievements of the past, and those which the future seems so likely to produce.

To complete the Memoir, a notice of Wellington's civil career, equally brief and general with that of his military exploits, has been added. This part of the subject has been lately placed before the public with many new details and

illustrations, and in a most interesting form, in that portion of the joint narrative before alluded to, which is altogether the work of Mr Gleig. For the execution of his task he has enjoyed peculiar advantages. Besides his personal recollections of the Duke, who was frequently his correspondent and friendly adviser, and whom he often visited at Walmer, he has had access to important papers never before published, and has thus produced as full and clear a narrative of Wellington's political and private life as is at present attainable.

STAFF COLLEGE, *June 1860.*

WELLINGTON'S CAREER.



THE generation whose attention was awakened to public events during the second quarter of the present century, beheld a man standing solitary and high above the most eminent of the time. He was not only above rivalry, but above envy. His fame, not associated with any party nor any measure, was the common property of Englishmen. His words on grave or on light matters were received like the utterances of an oracle. He lived altogether in public, yet familiarity with his presence seemed to increase, instead of diminishing, the respect of the multitude. Leaders of parties about to close in desperate strife, would pause at his word like knights in a tournament obeying the truncheon of their marshal. When there was doubt or change in the councils of the State, his wisdom was the unfailing resort of the Crown. Breathing this atmosphere of deference, which to most men would have been ener-