

The great difficulty in making a good marksman at all ranges and under all circumstances arises mainly from the inability to properly and accurately estimate distances. A good rifle shot, firing at a target whose distance from him accurately measured in yards, has no difficulty in adjusting the rear sight to the proper elevation and planting his shot where he pleases. But place him in a field without measurements and with a novel object to fire at, and he is all at sea, unless by long and constant practice he has learned to estimate distances properly. Very few men can be taught this: They must have a natural aptitude for it, just as one must have an aptitude for "wood craft." So great is this difficulty that I doubt the propriety of any attempt to teach the mass of an army to fire at distances much beyond the point blank ranges of the piece. If we can succeed in making the majority of our men good marksmen at the distance of say one hundred yards, we will have accomplished about as much as can be expected under present circumstances. Hence, for the present, and for some time to come, that should be the limit of the practice. This renders superfluous the tall and somewhat awkward "hausse" now used on the regulation arm, and which to the vast majority of soldiers is utterly useless. It should be replaced by plain, simple "Buckhorn" sight used on almost all sporting rifles, sighting through the bottom of which gives the point blank range of the piece. After the men become thorough marksmen at one hundred yards, then, and then only, should they be gradually worked up to 150 and 200 yards. An accurate pointblank shot will soon learn how much of the front sight should be seen standing up in the forks of the Bockhorn sight when his bullet is to travel 150 or 200 yards to reach the mark. Now comes the important element of estimating distances. The men should be practised over and over again firing at distances between 100 and 200 without knowing what the distances measured in yards are, so as to teach them to judge for themselves and learn exactly how to aim the piece to reach the mark. In this connection it is a good practice to point out to the marksman the difference in the appearance of an equipped soldier at the various points about the dress can be seen at some distances, and how they vary at different ones.

Beyond 200 yards for the majority of men it is useless to go. The great mistake made in rifle practice, I think, is in attempting too much. It is worse than useless to try to teach a man to shoot at 1,000 yards when he does not know how to hit a mark at 100, and causes a carelessness in shooting and a want of confidence in his arm certain to be hurtful to his efficiency.

Of course there are certain men whose peculiar aptitude as marksmen will enable them to attain accuracy at much longer ranges, and these should be organized separately into a body of sharpshooters, whose efficiency in battle will be of the highest importance. A man who can be taught to hit a mark the size of a silver dollar (if you recollect what that is) every time at a hundred yards can be taught in time to hit the size of a man at a thousand with accuracy sufficient for all practical purposes.

I have been tempted to make these suggestions with the hope of aiding your association in the very important object of its organization—to make efficient marksmen of our citizen soldiers,

Very truly yours,

JOHN GIBBON.

To Colonel Wm. C. Church, President  
N. R. A., N. Y.

We may remark that the manual adopted by the Rifle Association provides for "judging-distance drill" as part of the instruction in shooting, and it lays out a course of instruction for the armory and the field which will, it is believed, do much to remedy the deficiencies of which General Gibbon speaks.—  
ED. A. N. JOURNAL.

### THE CANADIAN RIFLE.

The Canadian rifle, known as the Duval Macnaughton, has been tried at Wimbledon, and has elicited marked expressions of praise from the metropolitan press. The *London Post* thus refers to it, and we select this opinion from a number of others:—

"During the afternoon a trial was made at the 900 yards' range with a new Canadian rifle, named the Duval Macnaughton. This weapon is constructed on the hinge-block principle, and somewhat resembles the Henry and Martini-Henry in appearance. Its action, however, differs considerably from both these, and externally the principal difference is that there is no long lever below, the only lever visible being which rises from the side of the lock, in much the same position as that occupied by the Snider rifle. The springs of the lock, are all upon the old principles, and if any were out of order they could readily be repaired by a common blacksmith; they are, moreover, of considerable strength, and the objectionable spiral spring, one of the principal faults of the Martini Henry, does not find a place in the lock. The extractor is of the most simple and ingenious character, being worked by a sort of a double action by which a pressure outwards is slowly given during the act in cocking the rifle against the cartridge case followed by a rapid stroke against the angle of the extractor, which throws out the case at once. The facility of this action was well demonstrated by means of a tight cartridge case which, when a rapid pressure was applied to the hammer, was thrown out with a jerk that sent it a good two yards behind the manipulator. The manipulation of the gun is extremely simple, and a man lying down can load, fire, throw out the case and load again without altering position of the rifle, a great advantage when compared with the Martini-Henry, from which the cartridge cannot be extracted without using the lever below the stock, thus rendering it necessary to lift up the gun or turn it to one side. By taking out a single screw a plate on the side of the breech shoe can be taken off, exposing the whole mechanism of the lock, which can thus be examined, and if needful cleaned, while if during such an operation it became necessary to use the weapon, the plate might be dropped into the pouch, and the rifle loaded without it. The hinge lock of the breech is so grooved out that the barrel can be inspected or cleaned out from the breech, so that the soldier or sportsman can clean out his rifle, both breech or barrel, without for one moment losing its value as an effective weapon. The rifle is entirely worked by the hammer and trigger, and 30 shots a minute can readily be got off from it by skillful hands. It can be half-cocked when necessary, and the barrel is constructed so as to use the ammunition, supplied Martini-Henry. The barrel is also said to be of an improved construction, and to possess a considerably lower trajectory than the Henry barrel. It is rifled with seven shallow segmental grooves, and the recoil of the weapon is very

slight compared to that of the Martini-Henry. It is said that the Canadian Government are about to supply the forces of the Dominion with this rifle, and if so they will have men armed with probably the most serviceable weapon yet provided for troops."

### QUEBEC PROVINCIAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

#### GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MEDAL

We are pleased to hear that His Excellency the Governor General has placed two silver medals at the disposal of the Council of our Provincial Rifle Association. These will be competed for at their matches next week.

The one is to be given to the highest Snider aggregate, the other to the highest small bore aggregate, and will be in addition to the \$30 in money which is given in each case according to the published list of prizes.

We understand that the arrangements for these matches are nearly complete; the ranges are in first rate order, having been very carefully repaired. A detachment of B Battery will be encamped on the ground during the meeting and will act as markers and register keepers.

A large number of competitors are expected from this Province as well as from Ontario and the National Association of New York.—*Gazette*

"Die deutsche Artillerie in den Schlachten bei Metz," published by Mittler & Sohn, Berlin, is a book of interest to artilleryists. It contains facts concerning the operations of the German artillery in the Franco-Prussian war, not contained in any other work on this war.

On the 6th of June, Heinrich Wilhelm Adalbert, Prince of Prussia, died at Carlsbad, of congestion of the lungs. He was admiral and inspector general of the marine, and is greatly lamented by all who are connected with the German naval service, being foremost in advocating any improvement or reform.



### Notice to Contractors.

SEALED TENDERS, addressed to the undersigned, and endorsed, "Tender for excavating and removing Earth, &c., from the Public Grounds, Parliament Buildings," Ottawa, will be received at this Office, until SATURDAY, the 9th day of AUGUST instant, at noon, for removing the above Earth, &c.

Specification can be seen at this Office, on and after MONDAY, the 4th inst., where all necessary information can be obtained.

The signatures of two solvent and responsible persons, willing to become sureties for the due fulfilment of the contract, must be attached to each Tender.

The Department will not be bound to accept the lowest or any Tender.

By order,

F. BRAUN,

Secretary.

Department of Public Works,  
Ottawa, 1st August, 1873.

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