

work. We tried it on all sorts of ground; first on the parade ground, then we did it in the field; then we did it on exceedingly broken ground, sand hills and gravel pits; and finally all over rough mountainous country in the range of hills near Adelaide, and in every instance it worked admirably." (*Capt. Gretton.*) It has accordingly been used there for many years. It is also being practised now both in Canada and India, and always with satisfactory results. All this confirms the opinion of the practical soldier: "I long ago thought that the system of drilling at intervals was an excellent one. . . . I should like to see the system advocated by Colonel Macdonald—and I may add by myself—years ago tried fairly. I believe myself that it would be successful." (*Colonel Sir Lumley Graham.*) Close order should be done away with as much as possible, and men used entirely in open order." (*Captain Cockburn.*) And another with bated breath states the views of himself and others: "I must say my sympathies are with Colonel Macdonald but. . . . I must say I was afraid to touch that question" (*Major Barker*), an indication of the simmering and seething opinion of regimental officers, which only the lid of official deference prevents from boiling over. If letters of private opinion, which the writer receives from officers in all parts of the world, could be publicly used, it would then be known how steady and rapid is the growth of conviction on this matter among those whose daily business it is to conduct the detail drill of troops; how clear it is becoming to their minds that drilling at all times with an interval in no way interferes with steadiness, and in an extraordinary degree gives aid to steadiness and cohesion in field work. And if officers who passively resist proposals to improve the drill system, because changes are "worrying"—a most unreasoning objection if the changes are "relatives a la guerre"—if they only knew how it would *save* worry, how on the contrary their men would brighten up and enjoy their work, when they found it based on a principle which gave the interest of reality to it, they would in their men's interest, in their own interest, and in the interest of the service and the country, consider these matters on their merits. If they knew how cheerfully men would submit—as they now often submit dully or uninterestedly—to a steady course of drill, when they found that it had ceased to be "drill having for its object precision and stiffness alone, exercises not having any real object in war" (*Field Marshal Arch-Duke John of Austria*), and was thus no longer "very monotonous and distasteful to all ranks" (*Lt.-General Lord Chelmsford*); if they found that it had come to have a direct and intelligible relation to field work and led rationally up to it; that it appealed to intelligence and did not knock it on the head; that the steadiness enforced at the parade drill had a direct, and not as it now has only an indirect bearing on the power of cohesion and recovery into good order from the flexion and temporary abnegation of form which "attack" work necessitates, officers would see that the reverse of "worry" either to them or their subordinates would result from a real effort to bring all work into direct relation to the imperative conditions of real work.—*Colburn's Magazine.*

(To be continued.)

Night Attacks.

It was recently pointed out by a contemporary, not remarkable for its readiness to deal with any new development of the art of war, that night attacks on any large scale are impracticable, and that therefore the whole subject may be laid on the shelf; but even supposing that this general assertion be true, surely there are some points under that head still left for consideration, such as surprises by small bodies, and systems of defence against the same. It is continually a matter of remark how our army goes groping along, and, instead of systematically looking round to watch and derive benefit from the doings of other nations, it merely glances up occasionally and catches only a partial sight of some fresh movement, which it perhaps adopts—often using a method without having the same reason for it—or probably passes by without recognising its importance. It certainly appears to know nothing of the force of mounted infantry, now organized by the Germans; it takes no notice of the quiet armament of both the French and German armies with repeating rifles; and lastly, the systematic practice of night manœuvres by the Russians is stolidly stared at as if it were never likely to be of any practical value. But there is little doubt that European powers are beginning to see, what we might have found out from any of our little wars of recent times, viz., that night attacks, on however small a scale, if properly organized and carried out, may be rewarded with great results. Of course the main obstacles to be contended with in successfully carrying out such operations are the great loss of cohesion and the consequent risk of a portion of the force becoming permanently engaged or cut off, without supports at hand, the excessively fatiguing nature of the work, the risk of panic, and the sneaking out of ac-

tion by a percentage of men more filled with discretion than with valor. These disadvantages can, however, to a certain extent be minimized by using small handy forces of picked troops, thoroughly trained and practiced in night work; and it should not be forgotten that these same disadvantages also exist for the enemy acting on the defensive, particularly in the matter of confusion and panic, which should therefore be, to a certain extent, considered as ends to be brought about by the secrecy and suddenness of the attack, whose object would be after all, not so much the slaughter of the enemy, as the break-up of his morale. In no operation of war does the disparity of numbers avail so little. Under cover of night a force may attack almost any odds with a certainty of some good results, more especially if the enemy be not alert, or be unpractised in working in the dark, for in this case his very numbers are to him a source of confusion and consequent weakness. The permanent moral effect of a few such attacks pushed home could not be over-estimated. With our small numbers economy of lives in action is an important point to be considered, and in a civilized war the effect of modern fire tactics on us by day would be appalling, so that, if it were considered only from this point of view, night working shows itself to be eminently important to the British army in particular for bring it on to a more equal footing with the superior numbers of other powers. Lord Wolseley himself says, "I believe that the army which first learns to manœuvre by night will achieve brilliant victories," so that there is hope that before it be too late we may see detailed instructions published and orders for their practice issued.

It is not till a leader has tried for the first time to manœuvre a force by night that he comprehends what a very unhandy flock even the best-drilled brigade will become; and yet on the other hand, he will be astonished how much can be effected in the dark even with large bodies of men after a few nights of practice. Work by night with those experienced in it becomes almost as productive as that by day. Ask any man accustomed to night work in the open, the hunter of western America, or the transport rider of South Africa, who has returned to civilization, can he go to bed any night in comfort without thinking he ought to be up and at work as soon as the moon rises? In all our little wars of late years our enemies have, fortunately for us, been too superstitious or not sufficiently confident to attack us in force by night, but they have all shown us to what an extent the action of a few well-trained daring individuals can be successful in harassing a large force at night. Zulu scouts, Soudanese fanatics, and Afghan thieves have all in turn necessitated large proportions of our forces being employed on the fatiguing duties of night out-posts, and have caused a continual feeling of unrest even in the heart of our camps. Are we too proud to learn lessons from such enemies? Can we not even recognise the value of a system of training small parties to harass and weary the enemy through the night—night after night—while our main force is resting all the more peacefully and gaining strength for the morrow's exertions—a system of active instead of passive outposts? In such night attacks silence, intelligence, and determination are main aids to success. As the attack is the quicker and more unexpected, so the panic of the defenders will be more complete and general, and for these reasons, the smaller the attacking body the more readily are these results attained. It would be well, then, if men, selected for their steadiness and intelligence, were trained in every battalion to effect night raids, and companies of mounted infantry or squadrons of cavalry, specially trained to make rapid night marches with a surprise at the end of them, would be weapons in our hands such as no other power could hope to forge. Night work should form part of the course of the annual military training of every company and squadron just as much as any other exercise therein detailed.

We British are generally regarded, and not without some show of reason, by our foreign critics as being incapable, either through carelessness, over-confidence, or inexperience, to take adequate measures for the protection of our camps or bivouacs on service. Our army has been compared to a knight who, once his combat in the lists is over, lies down to rest in luxury till the next champion throws his gauntlet down before him, not supposing it possible that anybody would come and rouse him with a lance thrust. This weakness of ours being known, it is not likely that in war with any civilised nation advantage would not be taken of it with results disastrous to ourselves. Night outposts and patrolling are partial protectors, but they are only sketchily practised or even theoretically taught in our service; while the arrangement of camps with a view to their defence, and measures to be adopted for the same on the occasion of a sudden night attack, are scarcely considered at all. Our system of camping a whole force in one united camp, where the panic of one part can spread through the whole, and where no system of mutual defence and aid exists, is in itself sufficient proof of this. We were glad to record recently that Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood had exercised the Colchester garrison in an interesting 'night attack' of much practical value, and at Aldershot we were glad to see that, 'field nights' are being carried on on a somewhat extensive scale.—*Broad Arrow.*