

SOUVENIR OF LOVE AND BATTLE.

INSCRIBED TO THE SOLDIERS' AID SOCIETY.

"The brave die never; being deathless they but change their country's arms for more—their country's heart."—*Festus*.

It has come—and a parcel of trifles,
A housewife and home-knit socks,
But a link in the chain of affection
That death now forever locks.

Yes, it came with the letters and papers,
Messages, loving and kind,
For a lad in the ranks with his fellows
Whom the courier seeks to find.

They had marched in the misty dawning,
And fought until sunny noon,
When the baffled and savage red foemen
Were daunted—but none too soon;

For they had battled with odds against them,
Where hideous Indian yells
Through the tangled ravines and ridges
Met screams of the shrapnel shells.

They return'd as the lengthening shadows
Creep out from the Eagle Hills,
And the haze of a northern sunset
Baskatchewan's valley fills.

But the silence of sadness was on them
For wounded and early dead,
For the blood of the sons and the brothers
By savages' bullets shed.

On a slope by the bright Battle River,
Where the prairie roses bloom,
Where crocuses and white anemones
Dispel every thought of gloom;

They buried the fallen heroes,
'Neath halo of tearful pride,
Wreathing flowers on a priceless token
That lay by His pierced side.

And they fired the requiem volley,
That tells how the patriots brave
Ever live in the life of their country,
Though laid in a far-off grave.

W. F. WHITCHER.

RIDEAU BANK.

OTTAWA, 10th May, 1885.

[Ottawa ladies sent a housewife to each member of the contingent from their city, but before the arrival at Battleford of these kind gifts poor Rogers and Osgoode had met their deaths in the fight on Poundmaker's reserve.—Ed.]

HEAVY GUN PRACTICE.

BY MAJOR D. D. T. O'CALLAGHAN, R.A.

(Published in the Proceedings of the Royal Artillery Institution.)

Practice, unless conducted with the utmost forethought and care, soon degenerates into shooting at a mark. It should be the endeavor of every commanding officer to guard against such a state of things.

In the instructions at the commencement of practice reports (Army Form B 80) we are told that "the main object of practice is the instruction of officers, non-commissioned officers and men." Now, without taking direct exception to this statement, it may be contended that the annual expenditure of ammunition has a far higher value than this phrase implies.

Practice should be the outcome of all instruction that has gone before, the coping-stone, in fact, of the structure which should have been carefully built up, course by course, the foundation being the elementary teaching that the recruit received in the working of the gun he is now permitted for the first time to fire.

An officer in command of a district, fort, or battery should have two main objects always in view, viz.: the efficiency of his men and the efficiency of his guns. The latter is entirely dependent on the former.

The improved heavy and siege artillery, now known as new type guns, have necessarily added to the importance of the garrison gunner, and the establishment of a practice camp at Dungeness, for which

the batteries are prepared by a course of instruction in siege operations at Chatham, has acted as a powerful stimulus to this branch of the regiment, and has given to its members a zest for, and a pride in their work, which, it must be confessed, was somewhat lacking before.

With such encouragement, with the knowledge that the worth of their arm is acknowledged, individual officers will vie with each other in making the men under them good and skilful gunners.

As regards preliminary instruction. It will be admitted by all who have tried it that nothing is so irksome both to instructor and pupil as the miserable system of trying to din into the apathetic or frightened recruit, cumbrous definitions, clothed in language which is Greek to him, but which, by a painful effort, he at last learns to repeat like a parrot, without having the foggiest idea of their meaning.

Merely let the instructor *translate* the definitions, and show his pupil the *why* of them, and he will see the apathy vanish, and find that nine out of ten men are both willing and anxious to learn. Let him illustrate his instructions with homely similes, and he will find that his class not only understand his teachings, but remember them.

It is quite possible to teach men the general principles of gunnery without frightening them at the onset with such words as "trajectory," "parabola," or even "intersection;" but such high-flown expressions slip easily from the tongue of the smart corporal, who has acquired their sound with perhaps but vague ideas of their actual meaning. Above all things, avoid that terrible phrase, the pride of the assistant instructor, "vis inertiae." "Weight" is shorter and simpler, and means practically the same thing.

There is no royal road to "gunner-making," so standing gun drill, though monotonous, is necessary in order to smarten the men and make them quick and precise in their movements. But even this may be made more or less attractive by conversational instruction during the "stand easy" periods; not dwelling too long on what particular *order* of lever is involved in traversing, elevating, or what not, but telling the number applying his handspike why he is told to use it in one particular way, and what he gains by so doing.

As a general rule, the gun proper and the theories pertaining to it should be avoided in these short discursive lectures; they are subjects better handled in the barrack room, when the instructor can have the aid of a black-board,—a graphical representation, no matter how rough, is worth all the talking in the world,—but the carriage and simpler parts of its fittings, such as the elevating gear, the tackles employed for running back or traversing, wheel-purchases, etc., all these afford ample materials for these brief intervals.

Let the instructor try to teach men the great mechanical principles involved in these appliances in simple, terse language, ask frequent questions during the explanations, passing from man to man like a form at school when the answer is not forthcoming, and he will soon be able to gauge the value of his own teaching, and will, moreover, get up a very wholesome spirit of emulation among his men.

In the more serious classes of instruction held in the barrack-room, the men should be taught by the use of plain, simple language, the theory of the explosive force of gunpowder, its effect on the shell, the path of the latter, the objects of gas-checks, the necessity for giving elevation and deflection, and the cause and force of recoil; this last named subject is important, as it involves the consideration of hydraulic buffers and other expedients of a like nature.

Ammunition should also be dealt with, its construction explained and illustrated by diagrams, the various effects of common, shrapnel and Palliser shell, and the suitability of each to the peculiar work assigned to it; the general principles of fuzes, both time and percussion, *without going too deeply into manufacturing details*.