

it as I like, and leave me alone, is all I want or care for on the subject.

Considering as I do that a 12-pounder gun, carrying with itself on its own limbers 33 rounds, is a most formidable arm with a reasonable supply of ammunition, I do not propose the encumbrance of waggons, each carrying 90 rounds in addition, as when the exceptional case is about to arise in this country of more than the 33 being required, the occasion will readily be met by special arrangement.

Our gunners must march on foot and mount on limbers and axletree seats for a trot, as they have long been in the habit of doing.

By no means am I the only Artillery officer favourable to such an organization, though I may be from circumstances the only one who can give his name with impunity.

Yours obediently,

S. D. SHAKESPEAR, *h. p. R. A.*
Lieut.-Col. Commanding
South Middlesex Artillery.

Thatched-house Club, Sept. 25.

To the Editor of the Morning Advertiser. Sir:—In the columns of the *Times* of Saturday last, the 23rd inst., Major-General E. N. Wilford, R. A., has entered the lists in this controversy, with a view of throwing the weight of his professional rank into the scale against Volunteer field batteries; thus forcing me, their chief professional supporter, to call in question his practical knowledge of the subject.

Knowing him very well as a clever man, an old soldier and personal friend, I confess it would have been more agreeable had he left me to deal with those for whom I have less regard.

It appears that he entered the service about eight years before I was born. When yet a lad, about thirty years ago, I well remember him, a captain of artillery and professor of history, I think, at the Royal Military Academy, and afterwards instructor of practical artillery; essentially was he looked upon as a scientific garrison artillery officer of these days, and during his long service, chiefly spent at home, was mostly employed in the ways above stated. He never was on active service, to the best of my belief, and my impression is he never commanded a horse field-gun. I may be slightly in error in this statement, but exceedingly do I doubt his knowing anything practically of horses, harness, and driving; and these are three things in which theory and imagination are greatly at fault.

Now, General Wilford kindly gives us credit for intelligence, zeal, and patriotic exertions. Surely those are three elements in success which usually carry all before them. Let me ask, is driving a field-gun an exception to that law of nature? Is it not a fact that uneducated country lads are taught to drive in a short time? I well know they are, having taught many; but I do not mean to say perfection is arrived at always in a short time, nor is it in anything else.

General Wilford thinks we might get through a week or two of campaigning, and no more. Here I differ greatly as my practice tells me the first few days would be the rub; those over, all circumstances requiring it, we could keep the field as well as any troops. As to keeping our horses permanent, he evidently entertains the same fallacy as others—that horses for artillery purposes must of necessity be specially trained. Of course, a young, unbroken horse must be trained, but omnibus, van, and town carriage horses, I submit, hardly require training to harness; and amongst their disadvan-

tages they certainly possess two or three advantages—viz., from constant hard work, they are extremely tough, and are accustomed to odd sights and noises; and while military horses are so little worked that they are apt to fall off when doing anything in excess of "watering order," our horses would fatten on the comparative idleness of campaigning. As to standing fire, how many carriages and pairs, with ladies in them, how many civilian riders were in the midst of the fire at "the Battle of Foxhill," where, for a few minutes, the "roar" was as great as I remember at the Alma? How many of those horses became seriously restive? I can only reply, so very few that I did not see one!

General Wilford considers that though we may learn to work our guns respectably, and to fire blank cartridge, yet to fire round shot, canister, and shells, and to fix fuzes under fire, is beyond us. In this opinion he is somewhat unfortunate, if what has been stated in the United Service Institution, in reference to the use of arms, be correct, and not having been contradicted, it may be assumed as true:—

"Everywhere, the Regulars, the long-continuous service force, are beaten by the Volunteers."

"The scientific corps, the Regulars of the Artillery, are beaten by the Volunteers."

As to our not being able to receive sufficient instruction, to "fix fuzes under fire with requisite accuracy and rapidity"—why from the nature of the thing, both Regulars and Volunteers learn in the same school of inoffensive target practice, a target with a return *feu d'enfer* being inadmissible, even if invented.

As to gentlemen not being likely to put up with the hard work, dirty work, grooming, and drudgery of campaigning, I think the General has mistaken the qualities of some of these animals. We have heard of a Q. C. cleaning his boots; but I know a deal more of that, and of gentlemen "learned in the law" doing the dirty work of soldiers on fatigue, and have laughed heartily at the story told by one who crossed the country, during the recent camping, with a quarter of a bullock on his back. Now, "the gentleman" may not stick to play of the kind for long, having other occupations, but he is the man for work in the time of necessity. However, those who are up to the work may and will never appear at it, they being free to do as they like. Nay, it so happens we drive very fairly as it is, we groom the horses ourselves as well as are groomed those which do the daily work of the country, and we do whatever else comes in our way as field artillerymen. What possible use, then is it for major-generals to tell the public, from their imaginative theories, that such and such cannot be done, while others and myself are witnesses, proof positive, to those things being done?

It is more than probable that officers of the Royal Artillery are taught a vast deal which may be superfluous to many of them, they being instructed in everything connected with the service, which is so various in its details as to be utterly beyond human capacity. For instance—to say nothing of the manufacturing and scientific branches—a perfect knowledge of the 35 ton gun is hardly a training for the little Abyssinian guns, the "steelpens;" nor does carbino drill form a dashing horse artilleryman. Every man to his branch or calling is, to my understanding, the sounder doctrine; and I know nothing so complex in any one branch of the ordinary work of artillerymen that a Volunteer cannot readily master.

All we Volunteers want is a useful style

of gun for the field, not so light that it won't range, nor so heavy that it is next to impossible to bring up sufficient ammunition, as would be the case with the 40 pounder; and then to be left to our acknowledged energies and instincts to use it.

As to Volunteers not being able to select positions for their guns in the field, or to attack field works, equally might it be said they are deficient in inventive talent and powers of observation; but who is it that pushes on the Army, eh?

It is known to me practically that the choice of positions for guns follows the same instinct as prompts a man when stalking the noble deer, the blackcock, or humbler rabbit. Does General Wilford think us innocent of such things, and that knowledge of the country is better learnt in the barrack-yard than in the hunting field? For many years, as did my father before me, I had the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance with the late Field-Marshal Sir H. Ross than whom never was a finer and more experienced horse artilleryman. On the eve of going to the Crimea as a second captain of horse artillery, I dined with him, and asked him this question—What is the connection, when in the presence of the enemy between a captain of horse artillery and his brigadier? His answer was much as follows; "If he gives a definite order, it must be carried out, otherwise there is your enemy, and you must deal with him according to your judgment, and on your own responsibility." My belief is that that principle obtained prior to that pernicious year of changes and fancies, 1859, when the system of snubbing captains of artillery, now so happily swept away, was first introduced. The emancipation is also a boon to us of no small moment, as a knowledge of cavalry and infantry parade movements is now of very secondary importance.

At gunnery we have beaten the "Regulars;" personally, I wish we had not, but our success has probably followed a law of nature, and is unavoidable.

I consider Lord Elcho's showing to be correct, that 100 Volunteer field-guns could be kept reasonably efficient for service at home for 15,000*l.* a year—that is, 10,000*l.* for horses, and 5,000*l.* capitation grant, or at the cost of 7½ R. A. field-guns, and that our guns should be supplementary.

It is extremely annoying being continually forced into apparent collision with some of my brother officers of a few years back; but I had no alternative short of quietly permitting theories and erroneous imaginations to take the place of my practice, and that is rather too unreasonable for one who by character was always independent, and who, while understanding military matters as well as most, is practically a civilian.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.,

J. D. SHAKESPEAR, *h. p. R. A.*
Lt.-Col. commanding
1st Middlesex Artillery.

Thatched house Club, Sept. 25

To the Editor of the Observer. Sir:—Any one specially interested in draught horses can gather much instruction from the work on "Modern Artillery," lately published, by Colonel Owen, Professor of Artillery at the R. M. Academy, Woolwich, from which I will now quote.

"It is generally considered that a horse moving at the rate of about three miles an hour can exert a force of 126lb. for eight or ten hours. If the rate be seven miles an hour, the draught should be reduced to about 90lb. and be continued for a shorter time, viz., five or six hours; and should