

The 5th regiment of provisional cavalry commanded by Lt. Col. T. H. Taylor, forming part of the forces in the Sherbrooke brigade camp, which assembled for six clear days drill in the Eastern Townships, on the 25th ult., is the largest body of mounted men ever brought together in that part of the Dominion, and were ably manoeuvred in the field by their commanding officer, assisted in his duties by Major Wood in charge of the right wing, and Lt. Col. Lovelace, acting Major in charge of the left. This regiment consists of five full troops. The men are uniformed as Hussars, and are particularly well mounted, nearly every man owning the horse he rides. The N. C. officers and troopers are generally speaking young and well to do farmers and a fine specimen of the stalwart yeomanry of the Eastern Townships. The time allowed this year for the drill of cavalry is far too short to permit the force to be brought into a proper state of discipline even with the best exertion on the part of the officers. The appearance, steady conduct of the men, and the manner in which the various evolutions were performed was very creditable.

Tactical Lessons Suggested by the Past Sham Fight.

The practice of dividing a force into two bodies on a field day, which is the plan now generally adopted on such occasions, possesses a great advantage for instructional purposes over the old idea of manoeuvring the whole force in one body, against an imaginary enemy. In the latter case the divisional commanders and brigadiers were the only ones who benefited by the operations, and that only in a limited sense, namely in the mechanical manipulation of large masses of troops, certainly a most important feature in the art of war, but deceptive in such peace manoeuvres, it being impossible to see mistakes of handling, with no enemy in front to dictate tactical consideration of movements in the advance or retreat; but by dividing the troops into two hostile bodies, every one engaged, derives instruction, the slightest mistakes are at once visible, whilst the interest generally taken in the course of the battle by those engaged lightens the toil, and gives energy to the movements, movements which now under the new system of extended formation, require as much ability, judgment and decision from individual commanders of companies as was demanded from brigadiers of old,—rapidity of movement being at the present day a most important consideration, whilst manoeuvring under the fire of the deadly breech-loader.

The operations upon the Plains of Abraham were conducted under the idea that an infantry force having landed and taken possession of the plain at its lower end (where Wolfe landed) were to advance of the Citadel in extended order, supported by cavalry and field guns, which, driving in the pickets and skirmishers of the defenders was at last to be met by a superior force, posted under the wall of the Citadel, and would retire before the same, leaving the latter victors of the field. A pró-gratitudo of the operation will be found in the number for May.

Before considering in detail the tactics carried out by the hostile divisions on this occasion, it might be as well to take a cursory glance back at the various changes which have taken place in the system of warfare during the last century, so as to be better able to judge and appreciate movements which are so directly at variance with the rules and precepts of by-gone days, and the reasons which led to so great a change upon the introduction of rifle fire and breech-loading arms.

TACTICS OF NAPOLEON.

Napoleon Bonaparte made a great change in the established rules and principles of war. Indeed, the same had been the case with the leaders of the first armies of the republic. It was by celerity of action, rapid marches, sudden attacks, precision of formation and deployment, and promptitude of execution, unencumbered with tents, camp-equipment, military hospitals, and commissariat stores, that those splendid and decisive victories were won, and that, too, in a great measure, in the absence of magazines, of all sorts of stores and munitions of war,—that astonished and astounded the world of routine and precedent in the art of war. Bold in the strength that freedom gave, the republicans sans-culottes required no other tactics but "en avant," and no strategy but "en avant." The French generals of the infant republic availing themselves of

this exalted feeling, and aware that their raw levies were sadly inferior in discipline to their veteran opponents, formed them into masses or columns, that they might by their weight break an extended line, and cutting or separating it into parts, might thus cut and attack it in detail. From these masses, in the first efforts of the republican soldiers, as the columns advanced to the assault, the boldest and most enterprising of the men started forward to act as trailblazers, or, as the light troops were latterly called, voltigeurs. In the more improved state of French military science, the French generals, thinking that some great physical force was inherent and mysteriously concealed in their column attacks, reduced the formation and mode of attack into an apparently scientific form. The evolution received its full development in the hands of Napoleon Bonaparte. By him, the system of attack in mass or column was adopted; but not, however, as it was universally, but mistakenly supposed, as more effective and decisive than that in line, but in order to make up for the deficiency of discipline and steadiness to which new levies are necessarily subject, troops in column, (especially young soldiers) deriving a confidence and mutual dependence from its density and compactness; if the head of the column consists of steady and tried soldiers, the momentum and impetus derived from the inexperienced and unsteady in its other parts contribute to its effects. The notion entertained from the success of the column attacks of the French on the armies of Austria, Prussia, &c., that that mode of formation is the most conducive to victory, was absolutely disproved, when attempted to be put in execution against the British. At Talavera, Busaco, and Waterloo, the column attacks were completely frustrated. At Talavera, the British line kept up an incessant rolling fire on the head of the column, while the flanks inclining forwards, directing their fire both sides of the column, overthrew it. At Busaco, the head of the French column fired; when the English line, overlapping both its flanks, drove it back, after three discharges, with prodigious slaughter. At Waterloo, the whole French army advanced to the charge in column formations, the guard being formed into three distinct bodies, each having a battalion in line and another in column on each of its flanks; when the English line, converging its extremities on the flanks of the enemy, poured in so steady and well-directed a fire, as to stagger and overthrow the foe. The same skillful and high-minded men adopted, and put into force their tactics, the first great principle of the science of war—(and, indeed, of mechanical and mathematical science, which constitute the principles and basis of military science)—that victory is generally dependent on the greatest quantity of effective force brought into action, on the decisive point or points of the field of battle at the same moment. Napoleon Bonaparte adopted and developed the same system, and was favoured with the same results. He deemed that the best formation or manoeuvre was that which produced those effects, and he was successful. His practice was to bring the greatest force that he possibly could against a weak, a detached, or an isolated point of his adversary's army; and having become victorious there, the dependent parts fell into his hands as a necessary consequence. He was, however, highly skilled in statistical operations,—was eminently endowed with the power of combination of masses to execute those decisive manoeuvres that decide the fortune of battles,—and possessed the military coup d'oeil in a manner almost infallible. No general who has ever appeared on the theatre of warfare was endowed with the power of calculation (by which the precise moment at which his columns of infantry could attack the disordered lines of his enemy, with all but certainty of success) in a more eminent degree than he. In more abstract language, it may be said that his system of tactics consisted in concentrating his forces on important points, instead of extending them in long lines of posts and detached bodies—in making his preliminary movements by vast swarms of voltigeurs, or light troops, when drawing near his enemy's position, in order to conceal the direction of the attack; and in attacking promptly and vigorously when the moment for action arrived. But great as Napoleon Bonaparte's military talent was, it must be admitted that he committed many great errors. Let us investigate the cause; and for the sake of brevity confine ourselves to his two last displays of "consummate military genius"—the battles of Fleurus and Waterloo.

In those contests, was the skill displayed with which popular and even military opinion gave him the credit for preparing his plans of operation? There, most assuredly, he did not display that consummate and unequalled military genius for which he had been so much lauded. What was the mode of his operations? Was it on the field of Fleurus, by repeated and successive attacks, and repulses on and from the villages of Ligny and St. Amand; and on the field of Waterloo, on Hougomont and La Haye Sainte, that he gave proofs of his great military capacity? Without wasting time in the inquiry respecting the Prussian positions of Ligny, we will confine ourselves to the English one of Hougomont. The attack on Hougomont was erroneous for two reasons: first, though it was the key of the position, and covered the right wing of the British army, and that its capture would have compelled the Duke of Wellington to assume a new disposition of his forces, yet its loss would not have so seriously compromised the safety of the army as is generally supposed, particularly as it stood low; and, therefore, had it been taken, its capture would have had no commanding influence on the British army, and could have decided nothing; and thus the undo of which it was of importance to Napoleon Bonaparte to avail himself before the Duke of Wellington could receive any co-operation from the Prussian army, was fatally wasted; secondly, that those columns which were slaughtered before its defences would have been of the highest importance, and might possibly have decided the fortune of the day, when he made the grand attack. A consummate knowledge of military science would, therefore, have suggested the cunning flanker of that post. On the other hand, the obstinate defence of that position by Wellington, proved his knowledge of the art of war. His object was to gain time until he gained the co-operation of Blücher, and the retention of this position enabled him to protract the contest until he was able to make the grand assault which was to decide the battle. The three and entire divisions which contended against the ten battalions in and about Hougomont, and the six battalions that disputed the place with the few hundred men stationed there, were occupied for the interests of the British army, but most unprofitably for those of the French army. Napoleon Bonaparte's grand or general attack with the columns composed of the old and young guard, was also erroneous, as they advanced to the attack without their flanks having any support