

ventional and formal," tending to the production of "imaginary perfect human automata" (*Field-Marshal the Arch-Duke John of Austria*); the true principle rather being that "rules are necessary. It is the wooden application of them, which is the ruin of the people who apply them."—(*Captain James.*)

The existing selection and mode of using movements do not fulfil the terse maxim, stated long ago, "It is necessary to establish one principle of action, and never to depart from it" (*Marechal Saxe*), and the equally terse maxim regarding the manœuvres to carry out the principle, "Ils doivent etre simples, faciles, en petit nombre, et relatives a la guerre."—(*Guibert.*) But if a general principle can be discovered from which *all* work may be done, Saxe's maxim will be satisfied, and a great advance will be made in the attainment of all the four points of Guibert. It must be simpler, and it must be easier to use one guiding principle for all movements. It must reduce the number of evolutions to have only one principle. It must also eliminate evolutions not relative to war. "Bannissons done de notre tactique une abondance sterile. N'exercions nos legionnaires qu'a des manœuvres necessaires."—(*Rogniat.*)

At present "men are taught to keep together not in mind but in body. . . . Surely what we want is to teach men to keep away from one another, and yet to remain together with as much cohesion of movement as possible."—(*Colonel Gordon Ives.*)

Can we get rid not only of the multiplicity of evolutions no longer useful, but also that other "abundance sterile," which results from having two main principles instead of one?

Have we any principle in our drill system which will effect all this? It cannot be the shoulder to shoulder, march by touch principle, for this is under modern conditions the reverse of "relatif a la guerre." What we want is a principle of movement with intervals, applicable to all evolutions and capable of elastic flexion without destroying steadiness.

To ascertain whether this can be done, while at the same time the national and characteristic are maintained, the best course will be to go back to the existing system of drill, and to see whether there is any formation in it, which will automatically give an arrangement of men with intervals from which they can be worked forward in successive portions. It is not necessary to go far back. There is one formation which is every day asserting itself as the most simple, convenient and universally applicable for the handy movement of troops under all circumstances. That is the formation once permitted only exceptionally but now dominant—the formation of "FOURS." It may serve to indicate the extraordinary change of view in regard to this essentially British and distinctive mode of movement, if the following: "The formation of four deep, though deemed applicable to battalion drill with reference to service, may, nevertheless, in certain cases, be applied" (*Field Exercise, 1833*), be contrasted with the statement in the same work 50 years later: "It is especially necessary that companies should be so exercised as to insure, under all circumstances, the ready formation of fours, upon which nearly all movements depend."—(*Field Exercise, 1884.*)

In passing it may be noticed that this passage reads very curiously, when it is remembered that in all exercises whatever, which are "relatives a la guerre," *i.e.*, which are intended for use under fire, and are now practised, the principle of fours is absolutely ignored. Our "attack"—our real business—is divorced from it altogether.

Again the result of experience by our own race in the only recent war on a large scale between English speaking people may be referred to. The following was said by a distinguished American general to an English audience: "The advantages of moving by fours are appreciated in your service, their use being generally authorised. I cannot but think that they will soon with you, as with us, entirely supercede the march by the front, except on occasions of parade. . . . Infantry should be marched always in fours."—(*General Morris, U.S.A.*)

Adopt this principle, and at once the national and characteristic assert themselves. "I have built upon the fours because it is a well known formation of the British army."—(*Colonel Bell.*)

While the Germans, who are held up to us as models, still grind away on parade in an order with three ranks, which is absolutely abandoned whenever practical work is to be done, the admirable formation of fours, developed out of a two deep formation, enables British troops to move about with the utmost freedom, without any risk of "tailing off" when moving to right or left in a filing style. It very plainly appears from the German regulations that they retain movement of bodies with considerable front, with shoulder to shoulder wheels, because they have no such formation as fours, and they deprecate the lengthening out produced by the fact that "each division in files prolongs itself."—(*Prussian Regulation Drill Book.*)

But it is not advisable to go further? General Morris evidently means only that instead of moving men about in bodies with broad fronts, and marching two deep with touch, it is more handy to move them

by fours-right or fours-left, and form them up as required. In this he is undoubtedly right. But his "except upon occasions of parade" indicates the old tendency to divorce the parade from the practical. If Col. Charles Brackenbury is right that the soldier "must come to an open order of fighting," then if a closed order is maintained for the parade it will be a case of "the teachers" failing to "recognise the fact." However revolutionary it may sound, it must be asserted and emphasised that all movement on parade should be consistent with the now imperative condition, and that condition is that the maintenance of order and regularity in moving in a formation with intervals must be the very essence, the life itself of all our training. Accuracy of advance is not to be attained by shoulder to shoulder. Close line only comes in at the point where the rush of victory by one side or the other is imminent, when *elan* takes the place of restraint, and when, under modern conditions neither accuracy of touch nor dressing on markers before the charge are possible. "As long as the line was the fighting formation, of course the more we had of advance in line and shoulder to shoulder the better, but now we do not fight in that formation; that is the question that goes to the root of the whole matter. . . . Our honor and our existence as a great nation may depend some day on the way in which we fight, and that fighting will not be in close order."—(*Major Barker.*)—(*Coiburn's Magazine.*)

(To be continued.)

Cheap Rifle Practice.

PRACTICAL soldiers all agree that, as a body, the British army shoots badly. It is nearly true still, as in the days of the Brown Bess, that for every enemy put *hors de combat* his weight in lead has to be expended. General Brackenbury stood aghast after the battle of Kirbekan to see the whole face of the rocks pitted over with bullet marks; and if this is the best musketry practice that can be expected from the Highlanders and other steady troops led by Earle and Brackenbury up the Nile, what is to be expected from the militia, who, compared with the senior branch of the service, are notoriously bad shots. Most persons, if told to look in that quarter for the development of a new system of musketry instruction likely to eclipse and supersede all our old methods, would be disposed to receive the statement with an incredulous smile; and if any man were bold enough to affirm that the solution of the most important military problem of the day was being worked out on a Surrey common by a battalion of militia during its period of twenty-seven days' training, he would run the risk of being looked upon as a wild enthusiast. Yet, if General Brackenbury, or any of that great band of gallant men who deplore the inability of Tommy Akins to shoot, had been with Col. Hercy, the officer in command of the 2nd regimental district, last Wednesday, at his official inspection of the 3rd battalion Royal West Surrey regiment, they might have been led to take a more hopeful view of the future of military shooting. A few years ago this battalion held a very low place in the order of merit for shooting among the ninety militia battalions of the kingdom, but Colonel Davis, who commands the Surrey battalion, having been fortunate enough to secure Capt. E. Herbert, an enthusiastic shot and an earnest trainer of men, as musketry instructor, the battalion has gone rapidly from the eightieth place to the fortieth, and the twenty-sixth in order of merit, with a good prospect, under the new system of instruction carried out in the battalion during the training period just closed, of a higher place still. A description of this system, which appears to have grown almost unobserved up to a remarkable state of perfection, cannot fail to be of use as well as of interest to every branch of Her Majesty's service, since the simple and inexpensive means employed are applicable wherever there is a ship's crew, a squadron, a battalion, a company, or a squad to be instructed.

The miniature bullet system of musketry training illustrated at Wimbledon on the last day of the 1885 meeting by the morning's practice of Lieut.-Col. Tynte, 4th Dragoon Guards; Major Wallar, of the Council of the N. R. A.; Lieut. Murray, H. M. S. *Excellent*; Mr. C. F. Lowe, Queen's Westminster rifles (silver medallist); and Major Richards, 4th Volunteer battalion Royal West Surrey regiment, the inventor of the system attracted the attention of Col. Davis, and, hearing of the experimental instruction classes which Major Richards had been subsequently authorised to organize at Kingston barracks, the commanding officer of the 3rd battalion the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) regiment sent down Capt. Herbert to make a report. The report proving entirely favorable, Col. Davis resolved to apply the system at once in this year's period of training, carried out during the past month on Merrow Down, Guildford.

Major Richards has, in the interval since the last Wimbledon meeting, worked out every detail of his invention in a form practicably applicable regimentally for the training of recruits sent to a depot or instructional centre, and he has, in fact, put some hundreds of recruits