

small and large bodies. Topographical knowledge, practice in reconnaissance and outpost duties, and experiences useful in real campaign would be acquired, and the cavalry soldiers thus employed would be, as they are supposed to be, the "eyes and ears" of an army.—*Broad Arrow*.

### The Soul-Stirring Drum.

THE drum, it is said, is to be re-established in the Italian Army. Over four years ago General Farre, then in the plenitude of his power, decreed its abolishment in the armies of the French Republic, and shortly after both Belgium and Italy followed suit, and the roll of the "sheep-skin fiddlers" was no longer heard in their ranks. The French, keenly imitative of all German models, no doubt observed that the Prussians, long before the idea of German unity had become a reality, cut down the big drum from the dimensions it had assumed under Frederick to the shape and proportions of an ordinary tambourine. So the edict went forth, and "not a drum was heard" in French regiments for some four years, to the inexpressible grief of the *bonnes* and *gamins*, who were wont to worship the big beard and much-belaced man, the tambour-major, as he flourished his awe-imposing stick, surmounted with a huge gold knob, at the head of his noble squad of drummers.

The history of the drum, if written, might be not only entertaining but instructive. The instrument is supposed to be of oriental invention and is said to have been introduced into Western Europe by either the Moors or the Arabians. Of drums there were three kinds: the bass or Turkish drum, the largest, consisting of a hollow cylinder of oak, covered at each end with vellum fastened to the rim, so that it might be tightened or slackened by small cords or braces acted upon by leather runners; the double or kettle drum was nearly hemispherical, covered with a strong head of calf-skin, and standing upon three iron legs; they are always in pairs and are tuned by screws, one to the keynote of the piece accompanied, the other to a fourth below; the third is the side drum, constructed like the first, with a brass cylinder, but much smaller. Students of Shakespeare will recall the constant reference he makes to drums. Possibly General Farre may have been reading the "Divine Williams" when he decreed the disestablishment of that blatant instrument, and said with Parolles, "I'll no more drumming: a plague of all drums."

The drum, however, is renowned in modern French history. The deep roll of the tambours drowned the voice of ill-starred Louis XVI when he attempted to address the crowd beneath the guillotine, and the drums which beat at Marengo, Jena, Eylau, and Austerlitz proclaimed the victories of the French forces. It is not difficult to see why the French welcomed back the *grosse caisse*, but incomprehensible to understand why they banished it for four years from their regiments. Nor is it matter for surprise that Belgium and Italy have again followed French fashion, and that to all three, in Benedick's words, "There is no music to them but the drum and fife."—*U. S. Gazette*.

### An ex-Drill Instructor on the Arms and Equipment of the British Army.

AFTER all the discussion about the new rifle called the Enfield-Martini, I shall esteem it a favor if you can find space for my simple views as to a new rifle for our infantry, and on the infantry equipment in general. Before I commence I must point out that I served fourteen years in the infantry, and used the muzzle-loader, the Snider, the Martini-Henry rifles, and was also "harnessed" with both the knapsack and the valise. This is my excuse for offering my opinion to the public at large. It is all very fine for officers (who know better) with thirty or forty years' service to suggest this, that, or the other, but the "proof of the pudding is in the eating of it." Let these officers be "harnessed" as "Tommy" would be, and stand under arms for an hour or so, and I am certain they would quite change their ideas. It is all very well for officers to talk who have nought to carry but a sword weighing a few pounds.

The Martini-Henry, I must admit, was the best weapon I had put in my hands for accurate shooting. As regards any other question connected with it, I cannot speak in its favor; for instance, there's the recoil, which is something cruel at the longer ranges. Many a time have I experienced a bruised shoulder and a swollen cheek at my annual course in musketry—the cause of my inferior shooting at the longer ranges. Again, when twenty rounds have been fired out of the Martini-Henry, the barrel becomes so hot that it is impossible to come to the "order" without burning the hands. Here's a circumstance that occurred to my battalion on our way home from India. When we arrived at Aden we got the order to prepare for war in the Soudan (i. e. in 1884), and I was actually surprised to find that each man of the battalion (who had a rifle) was served out with hemp cord to be tied round the barrel between the back sight and trigger guard. So much for the Martini-Henry and its faults. Now for a new rifle, which I would name revolving rifle, to be

made as regards weight, etc., the same as the Martini-Henry with its few defects corrected; to have a revolving block with ten chambers, and to be used as a breech-loader in all ordinary cases, but in cases of emergency, as in war—such, for instance, as the sudden approach of cavalry, or overwhelming numbers, etc., to be used as a revolver, firing ten rounds rapidly, these chambers not to be placed at the side of the rifle, so that the equilibrium be destroyed, but to be placed as in a revolver. The weight of this new revolving rifle will be (about) as follows: Assume that it is the Martini-Henry type for weight, etc., (with slight alterations as above-mentioned), i. e., 9 lb. plus, 1 lb. 4 oz. for revolving chambers, equals 10 lb. 4 oz., without the bayonet, which is equal to the German Mauser in weight, and with the bayonet fixed to 11 lb. 2 oz., which is lighter than the German Mauser with its bayonet fixed, and with a greater advantage owing to its being lighter than the German arm with the bayonet. Not until the British infantry are armed with some such rifle as this will they feel themselves on equal terms with the infantry of foreign armies.

The Enfield-Martini, I believe, is condemned, experiencing the same fate as the whistles the sergeants of my battalion were served out with, which we had to carry on parade to blow the field-calls. After being in possession of these whistles for about three months, they were one day suddenly collected and returned to the arsenal in Bombay—no one knew why nor wherefore, and to me it is a mystery to this day.

I shall now turn my attention to the infantry equipment, otherwise termed "harness." I can't at all perceive the utility of the valise. It is never taken on a soldier's back to an engagement, and what valve is attached to it, it is difficult to conceive, except that one looks grand with it at a show parade in Hyde Park and elsewhere. It is very difficult to sling arms for escalading in "marching order" with the valise, and the slings are too short. As regards the havresack, I am of opinion that if it was worn on the left shoulder, and the havresack hung by the right side, and the water-bottle on the right shoulder hanging by the left side (behind the frog), it would greatly facilitate fixing and unfixing the bayonet. The present system of wearing the havresack is a great annoyance when feeling for the bayonet when fixing, and more so when feeling for the scabbard when unfixing. It is all very well in times of peace, when the havresack is nicely washed and neatly folded and placed under the waist belt, to prevent it from shifting; but I allude to active service, when it is overstocked with the soldier's present requirements, and also with ammunition. At the battles of El Teb and Tamaniéb our pouches were not large enough to contain the 100 rounds we were served out with prior to these engagements. As for the two small pouches that are worn in front, they are utterly useless for ammunition pouches in war time; they hold twenty rounds of ammunition each, packed in packages of ten rounds, which fit the compartments so tightly that one has to pull and tug away to get one of these packages out—a pretty look-out when a man has fired off the forty loose rounds in the suspension pouch, and is perhaps pressed by the enemy. As regards the suspension pouch, I must state that it is the only useful ammunition receptacle connected with the present equipment, but then there is this fault attached to it: the strap to which it is suspended is too thin when the suspension pouch has forty rounds in it. This strap cuts the shoulder something cruel, especially if you have to march a few miles, which is very often the case in the field. I should certainly like to witness "Tommy Atkins" in marching order with the present equipment, with 100 rounds of ammunition, skirmishing before an enemy, especially when there is a little extra doubling to do. For instance, when the "assembly" sounds after about one hour's hard skirmishing, and he gets the order to reinforce skirmishers. A few minutes after, he would be more fit for an ambulance wagon than reinforcing. In my opinion, therefore, viewing all the iotas from a military point of view, I am of opinion that the British infantry soldier is too tightly packed, and he has far too much weight to carry if in "marching order." On the other hand, if he had something loose about him, so as he could act more freely, with two good pouches to contain 100 rounds of loose ammunition, the folded coat on his back, the mess tin in the waist belt in rear, the frog, waterbottle, and havresack ought to complete his equipment, which will not be so heavy. I am certain he would be much more free. The present equipment is certainly more for show than for fighting.—*V. S. Review*.

The number of men killed or wounded in proportion to the number of shots fired in action is given by the author of the "Rifle and how to use it," as follows: At the battle of Vittoria, one in 800. During the Caffre war at the Cape of Good Hope in 1851, about one in 3,200. At Chernbusco, during the war between the United States and Mexico, the United States soldiers killed or wounded one every 125 shots; whilst on the side of the Mexicans the hits were only about one in 800.

Seventy of the new pattern Enfield-Martini rifles have, by order of the war office authorities, been issued to the principal rifle clubs in the United Kingdom for experimental purposes. The rifles will be placed in the hands of practical shots, who have been requested to furnish reports.—*U. S. G.*