

For "THE REVIEW."

## NOTES AND QUERIES.

*(Continued from our last.)*

Noting the new principle of forming square from a line of four companies, as explained in the VOLUNTEER REVIEW, and on which I ventured to base, in my previous "notes and queries," an idea of forming a four-deep square from eight companies, and a three-deep square from six companies. I would prosecute the analogy by asking whether company-squares might not be formed on precisely the same principle so long as a company continues to be divided into four sections with advantage superior to that of the present formation: *i. e.* second section stand fast—first and third wheel back and form the side faces—fourth double to take up the rear face. This formation would leave a clear space for the supernumeraries within the square, and would certainly be capable of being formed as rapidly as the present close column of sections.

But I cannot help entertaining a doubt that the present formation of fours, sections and subdivisions with all, ere long, be found unnecessary; and, the more I consider the subject, the more this idea becomes impressed on my mind. Indeed, since I have addressed you last week, when the formation of a four-deep square from column without "sections" remained a stumbling block to my conceptions, a simple enough method of overcoming that difficulty has presented itself, which I will endeavor to describe.

Suppose a column of six companies, no matter whether an open, or a quarter distance column. It is desired to form square four deep, say on the leading company. (Let me, however, premise that I am imagining companies told off in nothing but "sections of fours" 1, 2, 3, 4—1, 2, 3, 4—and so on.) Nos. 1 and 2 would act as at present laid down.

The right section of fours of No. 3 would move straight to its front, the remaining fours either wheel first to the right, and then to the left on the principles of sec. 12 of Company, and section 29 of battalion drill, or move diagonally at the double, wheel and cover off in rear, which would perhaps be the best.

The leading section of four would of course halt on closing on the right four of No. 2 Company, the remainder closing on it to 24 or 30 inch distance, each section facing outwards (*i. e.* towards the right face of the square) as it closed and halted.

There would thus be formed the right face of the square, without the slightest disturbance of the sections of four; and in reforming, all that would be necessary would be to face to the rear of the square, step off, change direction to the right, open from the rear section of four, when that section should have attained the formed position of the right of the company in column and

wheel into (the company) line to the right. This would of course bring No. 3 into its place in column rear rank in front, but that would be of no consequence whatever as there should be no difference between front and rear rank, or rather no front or rear rank at all, and the section of four would be all that it would be necessary to consider.

If, however, it were deemed indispensable to bring the same rank in front as originally stood there (a necessity I should repudiate) it would only be requisite to move No. 3, on its original alignment in column, the depth of the front of another four, turn it about, and wheel the fours left into line.

No. 4 Company would move, but from *its left*, in a similar manner, forming the left of the square.

The two rear companies would move as at present.

Company squares might be formed, for the most part, on the new principle from line. (A formation chiefly required for supports.) A company of four sections of four would of course do it as a company told off in sections would. In a company of five sections, I would send the two left sections to the rear, the inner section of the two entering the body of the square, and proceeding to strengthen the front and side faces. A Company of six sections of four would form a three-deep square in the same manner as suggested for a Battalion of six companies in my previous article, and so on.

The front of a column marching in sections of fours might be increased to a front of *double fours* in the same way that sections and subdivisions are now increased to subdivisions and companies—these again to quadruple fours—and I do not think it would be difficult to devise an orderly increase of front to any intermediate number of fours—say three or five, which would probably be the utmost required short of the front of a company.

I would here explain that by *sections of four* I mean both front and rear rank together, and I cannot but think that a system of drill might be digested, on the principle of telling off a company in such sections of fours *only*, which, from its simplicity, would, at least, be admirably adapted to raw levies made for a sudden emergency. In as much as recruits would be free from the puzzling intricacies of the present formation of fours, and from the additional and often ill-discharged responsibilities of pivot men of subdivisions and section; while the constant practice of wheeling in small sections would tend to render the wheel of a company easier. It would in no way interfere with file movements, but would relieve the soldier from the necessity of bearing in mind whether he is a right or a left file, and only leave imposed upon him the obligation of sticking to his section of fours, and remembering his number therein.

These fours should always be wheeled forward; and from the halt, *on the move*, by the words "Fours right" or "Fours left," "Quick (or Double) march," and "Forward" when square. On the march, no word forward would be requisite.

Possessing the same flexibility as a column of Companies without a fixed pivot flank a company marching to a flank could be formed to the right or left at once, by the wheel of fours on the outer flank of the section previously formed, and it might sometimes be found desirable to increase a single to a double column of companies by moving alternate companies to a flank in this way.

The idea of a company which could be an aggregate of (so to speak) independent little bodies of four file each with an utter disregard to subdivisions and sections, will doubtless startle many; but, "*magna componere parvois*," the most active and flexible of European armies previous to the time of Napoleon, unlike any army of the present day, was not divided into corps, divisions or brigades, capable of independent action, but was an aggregate of battalions. An army of Frederick was itself the integer, and any detachment was a fragment of the line of battle.—(Col. Hamley, p. 305)

In telling off a company in this manner it would require to be considered what should be done with any number of men, up to seven, in excess of a multiple of four. That numbers (7), I should be inclined to leave in the ranks as a section of fours with a blank file, six might possibly work as a section of threes, any such broken section not being a flank section. Four might also possibly work, the two files covering the outer files of the section of fours preceding them. But one, two or three odd men might perhaps be withdrawn to the supernumerary rank, and I should prefer so to withdraw Corporals, who might carry their rifles at the Sergeant's shoulder. These would be of use in supplying the places of the coverers of the officers on the flanks in attending to the sections in their movements, and (if slightly increasing the number of supernumeraries) in strengthening the interior or angles of a two deep square.

In view of the flexibility which might be expected from this formation of sections of fours—for I should regard the sizing of a company while *manœuvring* as of no consequence whatever, they should be told off in fours both from the right and from the left, and I think I would face them about in proving, and tell off in the same manner with the other rank in front *i. e.*—that rank numbering—after which the proving would be very simple, embracing only a thorough proving of the fours forming the right and left sides of a four, and of a two-deep square (which latter I would form *in file* on the same principle as in fours for a four-deep square)—and some sort of a company square. For convenience of *resizing* a com-