

The British Admiral did not land his men as his doing so without the authority of the Sultan would have been a violation of international law, and the commanders of the foreign war ships which had lain off Alexandria during the bombardment declined to interfere.

The American commander, however, landed a party of marines, and, late on the evening of the 14th, the requisite authority having been obtained, about 800 British marines and bluejackets seized the gates of the city and made short work with the marauders, making prisoners of some, and shooting others whom they caught red-handed.

But complications now arose. Arabi, instead of capitulating, became more defiant, and his followers were exasperated at the action of the British.

The Sultan evinced a desire to let the British deal with the rebels, and the Cabinet accepted the alternative.—C. M. ARCHIBALD, in the *Naval and Military Record*.

The Magazine Rifle and its Tactical Use.

Much has been written, and considerable discussion has taken place, with reference to the tactical use of the magazine rifle, but there has been no sufficient experience to decide the important question of how the weapon can be turned to the best advantage on the battle-field. Codes of rules have, as we know, been formulated, prescribing with a more or less degree of certainty the exact moments—"critical moments," as they are termed—at which the magazine should be brought into play, and a shower of lead poured in upon the enemy. A plea, however, for greater liberty of individual action, though not in accordance with our own or Continental text-books, is worthy of being carefully considered. Such a plea is advanced by Second Lieut. W. A. Campbell, of the 9th Infantry, United States Army, in the current number of the *United Service* of Philadelphia. The all-important point in actual warfare for soldiers armed with the magazine rifle will, in this writer's opinion, be to escape observation and sneak upon the enemy in a series of small bodies, the only command being the signal of the sword and hand.

Though this view cannot in its entirety be accepted without certain reservations, it cannot for a moment be doubted that the advance "with all the pomp and circumstance of war, with drums beating and colours flying," so often described in the history of past battles, will be seen no more on the field of death; yet, as Lieut. Campbell pertinently puts it, the unseen thousands will advance to do and to die. He admits that a steady advance of a line of men marching shoulder to shoulder would beyond question be a very imposing sight, and have its effect upon the *morale* of the enemy; but, he very rightly adds, such an advance is simply impossible. The men, he argues, must advance individually, and individually means responsibility; and each soldier is responsible to himself, to his officers, and to his country for the manner of his advance,

the way he uses his rifle, and the effectiveness of his fire.

There is, in our opinion, a danger that in the present day the soldier is led to think overmuch of the advantage of seeking cover, and that consequently he may be found to hang to it to an undesirable extent; but we agree that his chief idea should be to kill as many of the enemy as without "unduly" (in the right interpretation of this word lies the crux) exposing himself or wasting his ammunition without the possibility of hitting something or somebody within the lines of the enemy. It is not quite clear how to reconcile the avoidance of this waste with the advocated continual "popping away." The fire, however, of men advancing singly yet in a sense collectively, Lieut. Campbell reasonably argues, though it may not at first be so very efficacious, especially at long range, enlivens their spirits, makes them forget their danger; and it must, besides, have a very great effect upon the *morale* of the enemy, who can only see a continuous line of flashes steadily, and with no perceptible diminution, advancing towards them.

That there should be no control of the fire, Lieut. Campbell expressly guards himself from being understood to counsel, for he perceives that soldiers should be taught that strength lies in unity of action and that fire discipline is what makes this unity of action possible. Very fully do we agree with the dictum that the battle-field is not the place to teach the soldier how to shoot. He must, in time of peace, be taught how to use his rifle, and in time of war when and where to use it. Seeing that we have not in our Army the advantage of having, as they have in the American, a large proportion of men who are sportsmen and marksmen by birth, we think it would be hardly wise for our soldiers to be taught to rely more upon their own knowledge for the adjustment of their sights. Whatever might be the effect of such a course in the American Army, we fear that it would in ours lead to very wild shooting.

To us it seems that the Americans are inclined to leave somewhat too much to the discretion of the individual; but, on the other hand, there is certainly good ground for the assertion that the European idea seems to be that the officer should know everything and do everything, and that the soldier should know nothing, never think for himself, and only do what he is told. M. E. Simond in his work, "De la Tactique des Feux et des Armes à répétition" (1884), writes: "It is useless for the soldier to learn anything else than to fire quickly with the elevation ordered. The rest belongs to the leaders, especially the officers." This, Lieut. Campbell very sensibly replies, depends entirely upon the manner in which the soldier is taught. Book-knowledge and practical education are, as he observes, two different things. The first may be attained by study and is easily forgotten; the second requires actual experience and demonstration, which leaves

a lasting impression upon the mind. It might, we think, be well if we acted more fully upon the principle that the soldier should in time of peace be taught to habituate himself to what he will have to do in war, to depend less upon an officer to think in all cases for him, and to act according to his own judgment when occasion demands.

Distinctly do we differ from the opinion expressed by Lieutenant Campbell, that were it not for their fire-action Cavalry would play but an insignificant part in the great drama of modern warfare, that the shock-action of Cavalry can seldom be employed with success, and that the *arme blanche* is practically a thing of the past. It may be that statistics tell us that during the Franco-German war only one per cent. of the wounds inflicted were due to cold steel; that though in the battle of Sedan the French Cavalry was used with a good deal of boldness and vigour, and the charges were pushed home for all they were worth; they achieved no particular success, the German Infantry sustaining them principally in extended order; and, lastly, that in all the cases the Cavalry suffered heavily. Yet surely during that war there were not wanting occasions upon which the Cavalry, by magnificent self-sacrifice, afforded most welcome relief or assistance to the other arms. Cavalry it must be remembered, always has suffered heavily. The American Civil War, it is true, teems with instances of the fire-action of Cavalry; but it should be remembered that the American Cavalry partook somewhat of the character of Mounted Infantry, and that we, at any rate, now strive to keep the two duties as distinct as possible.

Curious is it to find how, as we become better acquainted with the effect of modern inventions, we have to change our original views concerning their effect. When, for instance, breech-loading rifles were first introduced it was contended, Lieut. Campbell reminds us, that the soldier did not require so much training as had formerly been the custom in the close-order drills with the muzzle-loaders, and that the rapidity of fire would make partially trained Militia and Volunteers much more effective; but this was far from being the case, and actual experience has demonstrated that troops armed with the magazine rifle require more practical battle instruction than ever before. When shall this instruction be given? Very fully do we agree that it cannot be left until war has been declared, but must be done by training in time of peace. Our tactical formations may truly be changed by the nature of the enemy and the kind of weapons employed against us; but the training known as fire discipline must most certainly never be relaxed if we wish to secure the full power of the magazine rifle.—*United Service Gazette*.

The contract for armor plate which the Bethlehem, Pa., Iron Company is to make for Russia's two new battleships calls for 1,500 tons of unhardened armor plates. The work will begin at once.