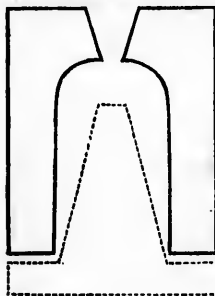


its flight. These three combinations constitute the *Carabine à Tige* now in general use in the French army. Captain Minié—in, I believe, 1850—dispensed with the tige, and employed a conical hollow in the ball; into which, introducing an iron cup, the explosion of the powder produced the expansion requisite. As Captain Minié has made no change in the rifle, except removing a tige which was only lately introduced, it is certainly an extraordinary Irishism to call his conical ball a Minié rifle; it was partially adopted in England as early as 1851. Why his invention has not been taken up in France, I cannot say.

Miraculous to remark, the British Government for once appear to have appreciated a useful invention, and various experiments with the Minié ball were carried on with an energy so unusual as to be startling. It being discovered that the iron cup had various disadvantages, besides being a compound article, a tornado of inventions rushed in upon the Government with every variety of modification. The successful competitor of this countless host was Mr. Pritchett, who, while dispensing with the cup entirely, produced the most satisfactory results with a simple conical bullet imperceptibly saucered out in the base, and which is now the generally adopted bullet in Her Majesty's service. The reader will recognise in Mr. Pritchett's bullet a small modification of the conical ball alluded to in *Sclopptetaria* nearly fifty years ago.

Through the kindness of a friend, I have been able to get some information as to the vexed question of the Minié ball, which militate against some of the claims of the French captain, if invention be one. The character of the friend through whom I have been put in correspondence with the gentleman named below, I feel to be a sufficient guarantee for the truthfulness of the statements which I here subjoin.

Mr. Stanton, a proprietor of collieries at Newcastle-on-Tyne, conceived the idea that if a bullet were made to receive the projectile force in the interior of the bullet, but beyond the centre of gravity, it would continue its flight without deviation. Having satisfied himself of the truth of this theory, he sent the mould to the Board of Ordnance on the 20th of January, 1797, and received a reply the following month, stating that upon trial it was found to be less accurate in its flight and less powerful in its penetration than the round bullet then in use. They also informed



Mr. Stanton that there were some conical balls in the repository which had been deposited there by the late Lieutenant-General Parker, and which, having more solidity, were superior to those sent by Mr. Stanton, thus proving that the idea of a conical expanding ball is of very ancient date. The mould sent to the Ordnance by Mr. Stanton was taken from a wooden model, of which the accompanying is an exact diagram, and which is in the possession of Mr. Stanton, solicitor, at Newcastle, the son of the originator. Evidence is afforded that Mr. Boyd, a banker, and Mr. Stanton, sen., both tried the ball with very different success to that obtained at Wool-

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