

THE NEW RED BOOK AND THE CHANGES IN DRILL.

In our last we very briefly noted a few of the changes in the new and reserved edition of the "Field Exercise." As we then stated, the alterations are not many, and most of them have been given out in orders during the past two or three years, and the greatest changes are in making the text of the new edition conform to the authorised amendments. There are, however, one or two amendments worthy of note besides those we mentioned last week. It is not our intention to produce a key to the changes as our space would hardly permit such a course, and already two able elucidators of Drill are in the field with keys and glossaries of the changes since the publication of the New Drill in 1870. We refer to our experienced friend, Captain Orr, of Airdrie, and Captain Multon, both well recognised as authorities on Drill. Their works are elaborately got up for the purpose of minute detail, which we can hardly undertake in the form and space of a leading article. The first change we may notice is that skirmishing is now to be practised occasionally by the sections of a company—a very useful and judicious course of training. We have already noticed that supports are to be practised in open files, with two paces interval; also a judicious change. Then we have on the same page (96) of both old and new books, considerable new detail as to skirmishing, but nothing very important except that the paragraph as to relieving skirmishers retiring is modified; the fighting line as we noted last week, never being relieved, unless when halted out of fire, and in case of over-fatigue or failure of ammunition. This is an approach to the German idea of using up the fighting line, the reserve being retained for the purpose of feeding that line as it is expended. Under breech-loading fire relief would be all but impracticable, and the greatest care is taken to make the fighting line take every possible advantage, of course, never moving from one sheltered position till a dash can be made to another.

In battalion evolutions it is enjoined that when noise or wind rendered the colonel's voice inaudible, the word of command must be repeated by the mounted officers, whose duties are also somewhat modified in various particulars in taking up points; while line formations are recommended to be frequently practised without foot-points, and in front forming into line at the halt on points at all are to be given (pp 102 to 126). In double column all words of command will now be given by the senior captain of the double company instead of as formerly by the captain on the left, except when otherwise directed. Double columns may now be formed from quarters column, and vice-versa, by the left companies making time and falling into their places, and considerable care has been taken with the formation of columns of double companies from line, both from the centre and on a flank. There are a few new words of command, such as in changing position:—"Change position quarter (or half) left, or right," and in forming line from echelon in an oblique position, "Line quarter (or half or three quarters) left or right on No. —." But what seems to us to be the most important alteration in the new mode of a battalion in line forming square. We must say, we always regard the plan adopted in 1870, as awkward and clumsy, especially after having participated in experimental drill years ago on much the same plan as now adopted. In place of all but the two centre

companies now going fours outwards, and wheeling on the flanks of the two centre companies and then turning to the rear, the companies which are to form the sides of the square go to the right about, the flank companies who have to form the rear face go fours inwards, on the word "quick march," the companies that are turned about, wheel inwards, and on the word "forward," form on the inner or centre company of their half battalions; when they get the word "halt front," they fix bayonets and the side faces, the flank companies move across in fours so as to form the rear faces, when they will get the word, "halt, rear, turn," the whole fixing bayonets as they come into squares. To reform line the movement is simply reversed, while column of double companies can be formed as exactly as if the square had been formed from double column, namely, by the side faces going right about and wheeling inwards, halting and fronting, and the rear faces stopping out their proper distances, halting and fronting. We regard this mode of forming squares from line much more to the purpose than the mode of 1870. At page 278, we have laid down new rules for half battalion double company formations, while in brigade drill there are a few changes which, however, do not effect the necessary routine drill either of company or battalion. In certain respects, it seems to us there is a return, in some particulars, to old methods. It would appear that the manual exercise at inspections will be performed with fixed bayonets, but we should not be surprised to see the rule modified for all troops armed with, or drilled after the method of the short rifle.

Really, after all, there is very little essentially new in the New Red Book. It is simply, in almost all respects, only a corrected edition of the old, but the difficulty of mastering details, so little marked, whatever be their importance, will not be the less annoying for a time, and the most difficult to master. The Commander-in-chief forbids any deviation from the New Red Book, and it is a pity that a new "Volunteer Regulations" is not forthcoming which would cancel all previous orders and be something like an accurate *code mecum* of Volunteers demands and duties.—*Volunteer News*.

THE BRAZILIAN IRONCLAD INDEPENDENCIA.

The unfortunate situation of this vessel gives interest to the following particulars:—"The *Independencia* is a ship 300ft. long 63ft. broad, and of slightly more than 5000 tons burthen. She therefore compares in size very closely with our own finest ironclads *Hercules* and *Sulton*. She is 10ft. broader than the ill-fated *Captain*, and in bulk, displacement, or total weight exceeds her by more than 2000 tons. She is of the turret type, and in many respects intermediate—especially as regards free free boards between the last named ship and Mr. Reed's *Monarch*, the height of her side above water being 11ft. at load draught, the *Captain's* having been (as intended) 8ft., and the *Monarch's* 14ft. Much of the armour upon her sides is no less than twelve inches thick, and that upon her turret is to be thicker. The turrets, which are already built and on board, but without armour, are to be armed with 35 ton guns of the Whitworth type. She is to be powerfully rigged and is to be propelled under steam by Penn engines of the largest class, driving a single screw. It follows from these particulars

that we have here the most powerful, although not the largest, rigged, sailing ironclad yet constructed for any Government. In preparing her designs the Brazilian officers who came over to this country to construct her had the assistance of J. E. Reed, M. P., in whose office her drawings and specifications were prepared. When the contract for building her was made, however, the Brazilian officers took into their own hands the responsibility of seeing her properly built and launched without the assistance of Mr. Reed or of an English staff of overseers. This circumstance is of great importance at the present moment, because it is quite unusual in the case of ships of so much importance building for foreign Governments. At the present moment, in the neighbouring establishment to that in which the *Independencia* lies, two fine ironclad frigates, each of about equal tonnage with her, are building (one recently launched) for the Imperial German Government, and although German overseers are present, Mr. Reed is in responsible charge of these ships, and has a trained staff of overseers always supervising the work. A little lower down the river, at the Thames Ironworks Company, two equally large ships, are building for the Turkish Government, and these again are under the care of English overseers, appointed in this case by our own Admiralty. In the case of the *Independencia*, this element of British skilled and independent supervision of the building and of the launch has been wanting, and we think it only fair to ourselves as a nation that this important fact should be clearly understood, as it makes a striking departure from usual practice.

"In the next place, it is to be observed that the launching arrangements of this ship were very unusual, no less than six sliding ways and cradles, three on each side of the keel, having been employed, whereas one only on each side is usual. It is difficult to see in the character and circumstances of the ship herself any necessity for so large a departure from the ordinary practice. It is quite true that the *Independencia* is a broad ship, but she is no broader, or broader only by a few inches, if at all, than the German ironclad *Kaiser*, one of the two frigates which we have already referred to, and which was launched recently with perfect success upon the usual two slides only. The second German frigate, of equal size and similar build, will be launched, we understand, within a month from the present date, and in the same manner, and, we trust, successfully. If there were features in the proportions, form, or construction of the Brazilian ship which rendered it desirable to reduce the pressure upon the launching ways, the most obvious course would have been to avoid placing much of the armour upon her until she was afloat; but, instead of this, it is easy to see that by far the larger part of the armour-casing of the ship proper was put upon her before the launch, and a very considerable quantity of iron plates and other weighty things that are not even fastened, and therefore obviously not in any way strengthening the ship, were also placed on board. The novel increase in the number of the launching ways was, therefore, probably due either to the nature of the ground, or the position of the piling, or some proposal for improving upon the usual method of launching large ships. What the declivity of the launch was, and whether the usual curvature was given to them longitudinally precisely according to recognised methods, we cannot say.

"It is next to be remarked that the very