

THE PRUSSIAN NEEDLE GUN

The construction of the Prussian needle gun, which proved so destructive during the war of 1866, is shown in Figs. 1, 2, and 3.

Fig. 1 represents the breech piece, with its parts partly in section, contracted longitudinally. In fact this breech-piece is eleven inches long. The case, A, is screwed to the breech of the barrel, which at this point is bored out for a cartridge chamber, to the depth of the lands or grooves in the barrel proper. Inside this case is a cylindrical chamber, B, furnished with a handle and knob, C, as shewn on Fig. 3, which can be moved along a longitudinal slot in the case, having a transverse slot inclining toward the forward or muzzle end. This chamber is convexed or bored at the end, and fits over the conical end of the barrel at D. A sharp blow of the hand on the knob forces its shank into the spirally-transverse slot, and effectually closes the joint at D. Inside the chamber is a cylinder, E, (Fig. 2) containing the needle bolt, F, the spiral spring, G, and the needle, H. At H is also a plug or guide, screwed to the inside of the chamber, B. On the apex of this the cartridge rests. A spring, I, with its end catch serves to withdraw the cylinder, E, with the bolt, F. The trigger, J, is a bell-crank lever, which depresses the spring, K, and allows the cylinder and contents to be drawn to the rear. L is the powder, M the percussion wafer, N the sabot, and O the bullet—all enveloped in paper.

The operation of this mechanism is easily understood. The spring, I, being pressed, unlocks from the case, B, and allows the sliding back of the cylinder, E, so that the rear projection of the bolt, F, takes the spring, K, and the needle is withdrawn into its guide or sheath, H. The chamber, B, is then unlocked by the knob, C, and slid back so that the front projection of F catches the spring, K, thus compressing the spiral, G. The rear of the barrel is thus opened, and the cartridge can be introduced.

The chamber is then moved forward and locked against the barrel, and the spring, I, is pressed down and the needle bolt moved forward, so that the rear projection rests against the spring, K, and the needle rests against the rear of the cartridge, and the piece is ready for firing. The front of the needle bolt is recessed, and receives a leather washer, designed to prevent the escape of the products of the gas combustion to the cylinder, B—an office it performs but inefficiently.

The experience of the war thus far has not determined that the needle gun is inferior to the Chassepot; on the contrary, for comparatively short range it has been declared decidedly superior.

THE WHY AND THE WHEREFORE OF PECULIAR NAMES—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS NOT GENERALLY KNOWN.

BY THE REV. J. D. BORTHWICK.

(Continued.)

F

FOOLSCAP.—From *folia-capa*—a full sized sheet of paper—but contracted in the way now pronounced.

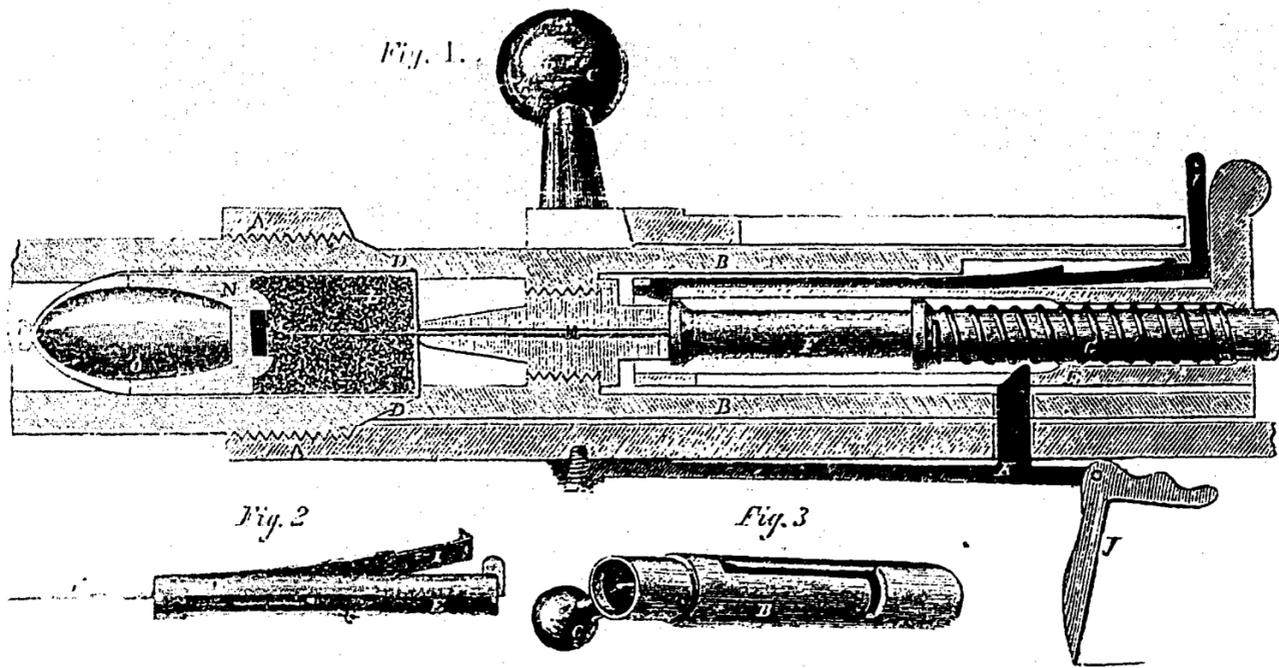
G

GALLEGRO.—It is a very piercing and injurious wind of Spain, and so called because coming from Galicia in the North-West corner of that country (Spain). See different names of winds.

GALLEY SLAVE.—It arose in ships in the south of Europe having 25 to 30 benches on each side, manned by 4 or 5 slaves to each bench, persons that had committed offences, and were sentenced to this slavery.

GARTER.—A. D. 1349; Edward I. instituted the Order of the Garter. It originally consisted of twenty-five persons, besides the sovereign, and has never been increased. The motto *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, is said to have arisen from the Countess of Salisbury's dropping her garter, which the king picked up, and said the above words to some of his courtiers, whom he observed to smile. Another account: Here was the first idea of the Order of the Garter to which Richard the First afterwards gave its motto in his French wars, and made it exclusively an English order, from being common to all Christendom, as it till then had been. In one of the battles on the march towards Jerusalem, on St. George's Day, 1192, Saladin and his brother Safadin were on a hillock directing the Moslems, who had repulsed the English, when from the right wing up hastens King Richard on Fanvill, and springing from the saddle puts himself at the head of the archers, and stooping down to one of his companions, who had been just slain, loosens the small tape with which the Kentish men used to tie their sheaves of arrows in their quivers, and winding it round his leg, just below the knee, bids all the Chief Knights (who were indeed his associates, and of all Christian countries) do the like and fight that day in honour of St. George; for it was St. George's feast, whose mass he had heard that morning, and received the host at it, and truly, though these gentlemen always fought well, they never performed such heroic actions as on that day.—*History of the Knights of Malta.*

Another story is that Edward III. at the battle of Cressy, ordered his garter to be displayed as a signal of battle, in commemoration whereof he made a garter the principal ornament of the order created in memory of this signal victory, and the symbol of the indissoluble union of the knights. These knights were styled *Equites aurei Periscelidis*, or knights of the golden garter. This is Camden and Fern's history of the origin of the garter.



THE PRUSSIAN NEEDLE GUN.

GAS.—The term gas sprang from the same source as *ghaist* or *ghost*, both being from a Teutonic word signifying *spirit* or *supernatural being*, and variously spelt *gast*, *ghaist*, or otherwise, according to the different Teutonic dialects. Now, some of the mineral springs of Germany exhale a vapour, which hangs above them in the semblance of a light thin cloud. This, being seen, was occasionally taken for a *ghaist* or *ghost*, but those who had a little more wit at their finger-ends, knew the thing to be neither more nor less than a vapour. From this deceptive appearance, however, arose the custom of applying the term *ghaist* to all vapours or aeriform bodies, and, being adopted by the continental chemists, the word soon became universal in this sense.

Gasconade.—This word is derived from Gascony—a province of France, the inhabitants of which were famous for boasting.

GAUZE.—It takes its name from Guya, a city of Palestine where it was first manufactured.

GAZETTE.—It comes from the Venetian word *gazetta*, a small coin. The newspaper first published at Venice, being sold for a *gazetta*, took its name therefrom; whence our word *gazette*.

GIN.—It comes from Geneva, by contraction, because first made there.

GOOSE AT MICHAELMAS.—The origin of this custom is thus accounted for:—Queen Elizabeth, on her way to Tilbury Fort, on the 29th of September, 1588, dined at the ancient seat of Sir Neville Umfreyville, near that place, and among the dishes which the Knight had provided were two geese. The Queen ate heartily, and, asking for a bumper of Burgundy, drank, "Destruction to the Spanish Armada!" At the moment that she returned the tankard to the Knight, news arrived that the Spanish fleet had been destroyed by a great storm. She immediately took another bumper, and was so pleased, that every year after on that day she had a goose served up. The court and then the common people adopted the custom.

GLOVES.—Gloves, perfumed or embroidered, were commonly bestowed as a mark of personal favour. Dr. Glisson received from Elizabeth a pair of Spanish leather gloves, embossed and fringed with gold plate; and when Sir Thomas Pope founded Trinity College, Oxford, the University presented him and his lady with a pair of rich gloves, the cost of which is stated by Warton to have been 6s. 8d. Ladies' sleeves, as well as gloves, were often given as tokens of gallantry; and, in such cases, were usually pinned upon the sleeve of the receiver; hence the expression—"I wear my heart upon my sleeve," and "pinning one's faith upon another's sleeve." In the time of Charles II. there was a particular style of glove called *Martial Gloves*, frequently alluded to in the comedies of Moliere, Sedley, and Etherege, and so called after the maker, who lived in Paris. Gloves, like salt, have acted many parts in their time; thus, they are given away at weddings as a pledge of regard; hung up in churches as a public challenge; thrown down in the lists for a like purpose; sent round at the county assizes when the judge invites the justices to dinner, every person so invited dropped a shilling into the glove; employed to convey bribes, from whence a bribe is called a pair of gloves, or *glove-money*; and often sworn by in the old plays by all manner of people, in virtue, probably, of their multifarious uses and significations.

GUILLotine.—The Guillotine, so called from Dr. Joseph Ignatius Guillotine, an eminent physician, orator, and philanthropist. He was one of the founders of the Academy of Medicine at Paris, and died, A.D. 1814, highly respected. The vulgar idea of him is, that he was the first who suffered upon the instrument which he had invented. A recent writer from Paris thus describes the guillotine:—It was painted red throughout, and consisted of a staging accessible by a flight of stairs, and rising some six feet from the ground, the summit surrounded by a low rail. In the centre of the floor thus offered were painted two stout uprights, a foot and a half apart, and eight or ten high. These were grooved for the passage of the knife—a broad, dull blade, weighing, as I was informed, 150 pounds, which was drawn up and attached to the cross-piece above, ready to descend on the pressure of a spring. On the floor, and facing the interval between these posts, is placed a long, low framework or car, which runs forward on grooves; and a plank hinged to one extremity of this car falls forward upon it. In preparing for an execution, this plank is raised so as to be at right angles to the car; and the criminal, on ascending the steps, is marched forward against the plank. Being suddenly pushed from behind, he falls with the plank upon the car, and the pressure of his body causes clamps to spring over him from below, effectually restraining all movement. The same impulse gives motion to the car, which glides rapidly forward; and the lunette (a half circle of wood) at once imprisoning the neck, the axe descends.

"Gone to Pot."—A tailor of Samarcand, a city of the east, chanced to live near a gate that led to the public burying-place, and, being a fanciful fellow, he hung up by his shop-board a little earthen pot, into which he dropped a small stone whenever a corpse was carried by. At the end of every moon he counted the contents of the pot, and so knew the number of the deceased. At length the tailor died himself; and, some time after, a person unacquainted with his decease, observing his shop to be deserted, inquired what had become of him. "Oh!" said a neighbour, "the tailor has *Gone to Pot* as well as the rest." And this is the origin, says our authority, of the phrase to "go to pot."

GOLDEN BULL.—The famous edict of Charles IV., of Germany, drawn up by the celebrated Dr. Bartholus, and having a seal, on one side of which was a head of St Peter, and the other of the Pope.

GOOD FRIDAY.—The day on which our Saviour suffered. He was crucified at 3 o'clock p.m. Friday, April 3rd, A.D. 33. From the earliest period of Christianity this day has been observed as a solemn fast, in memory of the crucifixion of our Saviour. Its appellation *Good* is of no very remote origin, and appears to be peculiar to the English Church. Our Saxon forefathers called it *Long Friday*, from the length of the offices and fastings on this day; but its ancient title, and that by which it is known in the Western Church, is *Holy Friday*.

GOLGOTHA OF CALVARY.—The Place of a Skull, not from any skulls found lying there, but from its fanciful resemblance to a human head. Another account says, Golgotha or Calvary, from the Latin, *Calvus, bald*, the ordinary place of execution for malefactors, derived its name from the number of exposed skulls on its top.

GIPSY.—The Gipsies called over Eoap: Cingari and in Spain Gitanos, are a race of vagabonds who infest Europe, Africa and Asia, strolling about and subsisting mostly by theft, robbery, and fortune-telling. The name is supposed to come from *Egypt* where the tribes first originated. They used to have a regular king in the British Islands; called in Scotland *The Gaberlunzie man*.

GRAIN.—A grain was originally the weight of a grain of corn, taken from the middle of the ear; a pennyweight, that of the silver penny formerly in use.

GROG.—Admiral Vernon was called Old Grog by his sailors. Grog is a phrase that sprang up among sailors, and is applied to the mixture of ardent spirits and water, which forms part of their daily mess-allowance. This compound beverage received its name from Admiral Vernon, who was the first that made such a dilution imperative on board a ship. The old naval hero used to wear a *grogg* cloak in foul weather, which first gained the appellation of Old Grog for himself, and finally for the liquor which he introduced.

GUELPH OR GIBELLINE.—Another story of the origin of Guelph, House of Brunswick. The first who bore this name was the eldest son of Isembald of Altdorf, near Ravensburg in Swabia, and Irmintrud, the sister of Charlemagne. Isembald was in attendance on the Emperor when a messenger informed him of the birth of a son. He requested permission to go and greet his first born. "Why in such haste to see the wolpe (whelp)" said the Emperor Charlemagne? This jocosely used epithet, the Imperial Godfather was requested to repeat at the font, where it was indelibly stamped on the infant and his descendants.

H

HARLEQUIN.—This name is derived from a famous comedian who frequented Mr. Harley's house before he was created Earl of Oxford, and to whom his friends gave the name of Harlequino, hence harlequin, a merry fellow or comic performer.

HOCK.—(wine); *Hock* is a word derived from Hocheim, in Germany, where Hock is made.

HUSBAND.—Derived from house and band—for the bread-winner is emphatically the husband which binds the family in one.

THE WAR PROPHESED.—The *Pall Mall Gazette* has the following:—"To what extent can men prophesy, and is the gift confined to the just made perfect? Talleyrand is made to speak as follows in his "Memoirs":—

"We must not delude ourselves; the European equilibrium, of which we laid the foundation at the congress of Vienna, will not be eternal. Some day it will tumble, but it promises us some years of peace. What threatens to break it up at a period more or less distant are the aspirations which are becoming universal in the centre of Germany. The necessities of defence and of a common danger have prepared their minds for German unity. This idea will continue to develop, and some day one of the great Powers who form part of the confederation will form the desire to realize this unity for its own profit. Austria is not to be feared; being composed of scraps and morsels, and having no unity at home, she cannot dream of exporting it abroad. It is Prussia, then, that should be watched. She will try the venture; and if she succeeds, then all the conditions of the balance of power will be changed, and it will be necessary to seek for Europe a new basis and a new organization."

Having examined the more or less difficult circumstances amid which this reconstruction will be effected, M. Talleyrand indicates France as being the nation most interested in combating the unification movement or in seeking to be compensated for it. All this reads as if written after the facts instead of many years before them.