

NOTES AND QUERIES.

BY G. W.

DRILL.

The Horse Guards has recently furnished us with an addition to the Field Service (Batt Sec p 281) viz - The formation of column from line on a central company, all the remaining companies moving in rear. This manœuvre, although consistent with the principles involved in the new system of Deployments, can scarcely be considered a very important addition. And it may be remarked that, so far as I am aware, we are indebted solely to the VOLUNTEER REVIEW, for the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the order, for I do not remember to have seen any General Order in the *Gazette*.

At p. 345 (Echelon movements) we are told that the cumbersome and tedious process of placing companies at their proper angles in echelon by the wheel of coverers from the 7th file is applicable only to Instruction Parades, and that such manœuvres should, on general occasions, be executed on moveable pivots. It is therefore somewhat remarkable that no provision has been made in Section 33 to extend the principle to the formation of line from open columns at the halt.

Something like the following inserted in Section 33, would, I venture to think, be quite as useful a manœuvre as the one just promulgated.

An open column forming line on the front company from the halt, on moveable pivots. In this movement the caution will be, on the move—form line on the front company—the commanding officer will then give the order remaining companies—on the move left (or right) wheel—the whole—quick march. On this command the front company will move straight to the front, halting by command of its Captain on the word forward—given by the commanding officer to the remaining companies when they have completed the eighth of a circle. In all other respects the movement will be performed as laid down in No. 5 of this Section No. 33.

VOLUNTEER ENCAMPMENTS.

Perhaps a hint of a mild evolution or two in strict accordance with existing regulations may help to pass the time while the military authorities decide when they will address themselves to the solution of the broad problems which lie before them.

I notice in the published accounts of the recent Cavalry and Artillery Camp, the repetition of an error which struck me, as being a deliberate waste of opportunity for acquiring a particularly useful species of practical knowledge. I allude to the tents being pitched by the Regulars for the Volunteers. Volunteers do not require (how-
ever kindly the intentions of the Military Authorities) to be treated as holiday soldiers. If a volunteer is worth his salt he goes into camp to learn all that he can cram in the limited time allowed him, and he

ought to have the opportunity afforded him of practically working out every detail of camp life. Supervision and instruction by Regulars is a boon, but the Volunteers should do the work themselves. It was the same thing at Thorol. Whenever a Volunteer Battalion goes out of Camp, it should be made to strike its own tents, and whenever a Volunteer Battalion goes into Camp it should be made to pitch them for itself. There were dozens of Cadets at Laprairie in 1865, who would have known nothing of the routine of pitching a camp, if they had not gone down to the camping ground of the Regulars, when they arrived for the field day and taken notes of their proceedings. I have not yet procured Major Scoble's work but I trust, for the sake of volunteer officers generally, it contains the requisite detail for pitching a camp.

THE RELATIVE MERITS OF CAVALRY AND INFANTRY.

The opinion that Infantry in good order is indestructible by equally good Cavalry is one which has of late years, especially since Waterloo, obtained almost universal credence, at least among infantrymen. This idea is, to a certain extent borne out by the axiom laid down in the Field Exercise, that an infantry soldier, properly trained, should be a match for a cavalry soldier. The charges of the Mamelukes on the French squares in Egypt perhaps scarcely bear out the theory, the conditions of discipline being unequal. Neither does the breaking of the Persian squares at Kooshab, for a like reason, give to the reverse proposition.

The battle of Waterloo itself certainly afforded strong evidence in favor of Infantry, as, although "Napoleon's horsemen inundated the field, drove the artillerymen from their guns, careered in the intervals of the squares, and seemed masters of the ground, they failed to make a permanent impression."

A certain sanction is also lent to the opinions of those who believe in the innate superiority of steady infantry, by many records of the latter part of the middle ages. When it first became apparent that a well organized foot soldiery was at all capable of holding its own against the cavalry of the day—a cavalry, be it also remembered peculiarly formidable from its iron weight, and length of weapon, to an infantry as yet innocent of fire arms. The following passages from Prescott's account of the campaigns in Italy of Gonsalvo de Cordova, (the great Captain) against the armies of Charles VIII of France, will perhaps, in this respect, be not uninteresting.

"The astonishing success of the French was still more imputable to the free use and admirable organization of their infantry, whose strength lay in the Swiss mercenaries. Machiavelli ascribes the misfortunes of his nation chiefly to its exclusive reliance on cavalry. This service, during the whole of the middle ages, was consid-

ered among the European nations the most important; the horse being styled by way of eminence "The Battle." The memorable conflict of Charles the Bold with the Swiss Mountaineers, however, in which the latter broke in pieces the celebrated Burgundian ordonnance, constituting the finest body of chivalry of the age, demonstrated the capacity of infantry, and the Italian Wars at length fully re-established its ancient superiority."

The Swiss were formed into Battalions varying from three to eight thousand men each. They wore little defensive armor, and their principal weapon was the pike, eighteen feet long. Formed into these solid battalions, which, bristling with spears all around, received the technical appellation of the *hedgehog*, they presented an invulnerable front on every quarter. In the level field with free scope for action, they bore down all opposition, and received unshaken the most desperate charges of the steel clad cavalry on their terrible array of pikes. They were too unwieldy, however, for rapid or complicated manœuvres, they were easily disconcerted by any unforeseen impediment or irregularity of the ground, and the event proved that the Spanish foot armed with its swords and bucklers, by breaking in under the long pikes of its enemy, could succeed in bringing him to close action, where his formidable weapon was of no avail. It was repeating the ancient lesson of the Roman legion and the Macedonian phalanx."

We are further told, in a note, that Polybius, in his minute account of this celebrated military institution of the Greeks, (the Phalanx) has recapitulated nearly all the advantages and defects imputed to the Swiss *herisson* (hedge hog) by modern European writers. It is also stated that Gonsalvo, who however, was weak in heavy cavalry, carefully avoided direct encounter with the dreaded Swiss battalions.

It is obvious that the defects incident to what, both in antiquity, and in the middle ages, was nevertheless a magnificent infantry, are entirely done away by the ready mobility of modern battalions; while the relative strength of cavalry may be said to be diminished, not only by the introduction of arms of precision, but also by the want of that comparative invulnerability, which in the absence of firearms, must have added so much to the confidence of the steel-clad squadrons of chivalry.

So far therefore a reference to former periods would seem to strengthen the opinion of those who maintain the superiority of infantry in the present day. Neither does Col. Hamley in his succinct resume of the operations of war advance anything to invalidate that idea as relates to Infantry against Cavalry unaided by other arms. On the contrary he says "Good infantry throughout the century, successfully resisted cavalry