

AN OLD DRINKING SONG.

[There are few qualities of old English than the following drinking song, long out of print, and only found in some occasional blank letter volume. It seems to have been the especial property of a club of toppers in "Little Britain," London. Its origin dates back at least a three centuries. The careful reader will see a strong undertone of temperance lecture lying beneath the rollicking surface-fun.]

I cannot eat but lyltle meate,
My stomacke is not good,
But sure I thinke that I can drinke
With him that wears a hood,
Though I go bare take ye no care,
I nothing am a colde,
I stuff my skyn so full within,
Of jolly good ale and olde.

CHORUS.

Back and syde go bare, go bare,
Both foote and hand go colde,
But belly, God send the good ale younke
Whether it be new or olde.

I love no rest, but a nut brown toste,
And a crab lard in the fyre,
A lyltle shall do me steade,
Much bread I do not desire;
No frost nor snow, nor wind I trowe,
Can hurt mee if I welde,
I am so wrapt and throwy last
Of jolly good ale and olde.

Back and side go bare, &c

And Tab my wife, that as her lye,
Loveth well good ale to seeke,
Full oft drinke shee, till ye may see
The tears run down her cheeke,
Then doth she trowe to me the p wyle,
Even as a maull worme sholde,
And saythe sweete warte I took my parte
Of this jolly good ale and olde.

Back and side go bare, &c.

Now let them drinke, till they are full and wale,
Even as good fellows should do,
They shall not mysse to have the blyss
Good ale doth bring to men,
And all poor soules that have sorrowe boyle
Or have them lustily trowde,
Ond save the lyes of them and their wyes,
Whether they be yonger or olde.

Back and side go bare, &c.

CAPT. STRANGE ON PRACTICAL ARTILLERY.

(CONCLUDED.)

I have made the amount of ammunition approximately as much as possible that already allowed, and have assimilated the system of scoring to that laid down by the National Artillery Association, at Shoeburyness which works without trouble in the Volunteer Artillery competitive practice.

I wish to draw attention to what I take to be a blot in our system of artillery—viz, that though the instructors very justly receive extra pay for extra work, the pupils have no reward or inducement. In the ranks are mingled those who cannot read the figures on a sure or tangent scale, and others of excellent education, great natural powers and quickness of sight. It must be most reprehensible to have no system of selection for marksmen and range-finders, and to apply the same dull routine of training to all.

We all know that non-commissioned officers are selected for many excellent qualities with which gunnery proficiency is no thing to do. There is an utter disbelief in all gunnery not necessary for straight shooting among a few artillery officers, whose professional education ceased before the introduction of modern weapons. The sooner this opinion is honestly expressed and argued out in black and white, the better for the English people; for the question, though it takes its rise from a small portion of the service, has national issues. I am glad to say that a committee has been appointed to decide upon the details of a system of selection and prizes.

The garrison artilleryman is undoubtedly the soldier of most varied accomplishments,

from him is required the steadiness of a guardsman, the keenness of the rifleman, combined with the rough and ready energy of a sailor in handling heavy weights, ropes, tackle, and mechanical appliances, together with a knowledge of the varied armaments and stores of the Artillery service. Laying, loading, adjusting the fuse, pointing and firing his gun, are the least arduous and important of his duties. The monster modern guns of 12, 18, 25, and even 35 tons have first to be mounted inside on the top of casemates, by means of guns, shears hydraulic lifts, inclined planes, &c. In war, disabled guns and carriages would have to be removed and replaced, without the aid of guns or shears, too conspicuous for use within range of rifled guns. A whole front may have to be disarmed with all possible despatch, and the guns, carriages, and platforms transferred to another face, exposed to the real pressure of attack apprehended from another quarter.

Our artillery officers, sent in more liberal times to acquire information on the Continent, tell us that they saw this operation performed in an incredibly short time, at the annual inspection by an artillery general in Russia, where the fortresses are invariably under the command of an artillery or engineer officer. Repairing damaged embrasures and platforms, raising and thickening parapets, putting an extra layer of earth on bomb proof and magazines, essentially artillery duties supposed to be performed by engineers, would in the exigencies of war have to be carried out by artillery, assisted with infantry. It is to be regretted that classes of artillery are not sent down to Chatham, to profit by the siege operations carried on there. The instruction at the School of Gunnery, Shoeburyness, is most excellent; but there is no fortress to besiege, and it seems a pity to carry on instructional siege operations without gunners.

Military bridging and rafting for the transport of heavy ordnance, as well as embarking guns, form part of the admirably practical Shoeburyness course; for it is most important in war that artillery should be self-reliant, and not obstruct the bridges made for the rest of the army by the Engineer Train, who are not, however, always at hand in minor operations, where the artillery must fall back upon their own resources.

In all wine-growing and beer drinking countries, casks are always procurable, and together with the salt pork, flour, and empty rum casks of the commissariat, are at hand. These, with a lashed superstructure of rafters and floors from adjacent houses, form rafts capable of transporting the heaviest artillery with its ammunition, carriages, harness, &c. Horses are swum across, or can ford where the water would cover the ammunition boxes.

The Prussian retrospect comments on the inactivity of the artillery of an army corps on the wrong side of the river Bristritz, in the absence of the pontoon train. It is unfortunate that this sort of service is scarcely recognized by us or calculated upon, and has only been occasionally performed on emergency by some unusually self-reliant officer.

Our silver streak renders the disembarkation of artillery a perpetually recurring event. Aply as we have been assisted by our brother blue jackets of the Navy, our artillery in future wars will be more than ever self-helpful, thanks to Shoeburyness.

Being fond of false economy, we have never commenced a siege with an adequate siege train, but as the sea must be our base of operations, we have always fallen back

upon the Navy for guns; these and their carriages not being suitable for going across the country, have to be taken to the front by various expedients, which require that the Royal Artilleryman and his friend Jack should be, and have proved themselves, the most indefatigable and shifty of mortals. But Jack and his guns cannot be in two places at once. It is not probable that the withdrawal of sailors and guns from the French fleet is the reason why, like our own in the Crimea, though rendering glorious service on shore, it can scarcely be said to have achieved much on its own element!

When it is considered that artillery improvements must be rapidly progressive, and that it would be impolitic, if not impossible, to recall from distant stations, and reject for service, guns and stores of a comparatively old but scarcely less efficient pattern, it is the firm conviction of artillery officers best acquainted with the service, that the Royal Artillery can never be efficient until the care of their own special weapons and stores is taken from the Control, separated from "munition du bouche," and handed over to the artillery. You select artillery officers by open competition, they are scientifically and practically instructed in the manufacture of guns, powder, and all the complicated *matériel* of their service, and yet you take from them the most important part of their duties, to be handed over to civilians! In addition to the ordinary courses of artillery instruction, there was an annual class for officers coming from out stations, as inspectors of war stores, but the new control officers were naturally found so ignorant of a service for which they were not educated, that the laboratory department could not stand the strain of instructing them; and the artillery officers who wished to require a knowledge of the latest improvements in their own arm, were put off every alternate year to make room for the instruction of commissariat officers and others in duties that are essentially artillery. This is not likely to be borne without deterioration of *esprit* and efficiency by any body of officers. As for the non-commissioned officers and rank and file, with whom the eye educates the mind, efficiency cannot be expected, as long as they are relegated to infantry drill, varied by the occasional handling of the obsolete smooth bores which still encumber our forts. The artillery duties of transporting and embarking the newest guns and ammunition in our arsenals are given to the Army Service Corps, who, it is said, are to be increased to meet these requirements. This duty was formerly entrusted to the garrison artillery, who, with the drivers, also employed in Woolwich Arsenal, formed an artillery reserve, available in war, which we drew upon for the Crimea, their places being supplied by civilians with contract teams.

Reserve Artillery, Militia, and Volunteers.

The necessity for instructing 50,000 Militia and Volunteer Artillery, eager to learn, but who have no professional artillery chief, opens a wide field for the energy of the Regular Artillery. Such a vast organization to be brought into being will, I hope, lead to the appointment of some artillery officer of rank and known professional ability to the position of Director-General of Artillery Instruction, which at present, with its numerous departments, the Royal Military Academy, School of Gunnery, advanced class, Laboratory, Gun Factory and Carriage Departmental instructors, requires a head.

I have not space to touch upon the scientific instruction of artillery officers. It is sufficiently well known and acknowledged