

English Jottings.

It is a pity the authorities cannot arrive at something like an approach to finality in their arrangements for officering the army. It is not many days since they announced that in future Cadets would be able to join the Indian Staff Corps directly on leaving Sandhurst, without passing through a line regiment; and now it is suddenly proclaimed that the maximum limit of age for entering Sandhurst will be nineteen instead of twenty, as heretofore. This change is, of course, made in order to favour the public schools. The tutors will, however, always be able to hold their own as long as painstaking work is the main element of success. Much nonsense is talked about the lax discipline of the tutors. No tutor can hope to succeed without discipline; and we know of at least one whose *regime* is stricter than that of any public school.

We hope that the next change in the system of appointing officers to the Army will abolish the present ostrich-like policy which takes away about a hundred and fifty subalterns from the Militia every year. No one joins the old constitutional force as a youngster now-a-days except with the intention of quitting it in two or three years—as soon, in fact, as he has learnt his business. Those who pass the prescribed examinations join the Line; those who fail resign their commissions. It is not too much to say that the Militia is now practically without subalterns, for young fellows who join it for a couple of years merely as a stepping-stone are of no real use.

At a recent sitting of the House of Commons a solemn function was performed, the like of which has not been witnessed for more than forty years, but of which there may not improbably be a repetition after Whitsuntide. The First Lord of the Treasury had been seated for only three minutes upon the Government Bench after being sworn in on his re-election for the Strand when his name was called by the Speaker, and a sudden hush fell upon the House. Here and there were painful gaps upon the green-covered benches, all due to a common cause; but making allowance for the compulsory absences through illness there was a large attendance, and amongst the strangers in the galleries several ex-Members could be distinguished. Mr. Smith's duty was a painful one—"the most painful of his life," he discharged it with dignity and grace; and Mr. Campbell Bannerman, upon whom devolved the Leadership of the Opposition, seconded him with sympathetic skill. The only expression of feeling amidst which the Motion for the expulsion of Capt. Verney was made and seconded, was a subdued echo of sympathy with the innocent persons upon whom a great sorrow had fallen through the misdoings of the inheritor of an honoured name. Old Sir Harry Verney—"the very type and model of an English gentleman," Miss Florence Nightingale, the aunt, and others less widely known, but equally esteemed, were present to the minds of most of those who joined in the heart-felt "hear, hear," which followed Mr. Smith's entreaty that in consideration of the innocent sufferers the most painful duty the House could be called upon to perform should be discharged without unnecessary debate. And so amidst a profound silence the end of a once promising reputation was recorded upon the journals of the House.

I am pleased to hear that the disquieting rumours about Lord Lansdowne's health are entirely devoid of foundation. The Viceroy has been wonderfully well throughout the Winter—better, in fact, than for many years—and he does not think of resigning. On the 4th of June he will give his annual dinner to the Old Etonians, a gathering which is always looked forward to with pleasure by the host and his guests. By the way the banquet in celebration of the 450th Anniversary of the School, to which I referred a few weeks ago, is fixed for the 27th of June. The Provost of Eton will preside, and it is expected that Mr. Gladstone will give the toast *Floral Etona*. The Old Boys in India intend to take advantage of the *re-union* at Lord Lansdowne's to send a joint

message to the Metropole dinner-party, conveying good wishes to all old schoolfellows, and expressing regret at not being able to take part in the bigger functions.

A very interesting paper appears in the *Nineteenth Century* for May, over the signature of Archibald Forbes, on "The Warfare of the Future." Mr. Forbes is never wanting in forcible language, and this article is not an exception. In it he very truly says that the warfare of the present, as compared with that of the past, is "dilatatory, ineffectual, and inconclusive," and puts his arguments fairly and clearly for the assertion. But when he speaks of the Franco-Prussian war he only goes over the old ground. Germany was prepared for war and France was not, but the French *chassepot* was superior to the German rifle, and so on. Talking of rifles reminds me that Mr. Forbes does not like our new magazine rifle, the Lee-Speed, but he undoubtedly makes his point when he says that to the defence of the future belongs the victory, and I am bound to say that, looking at his clearly-put arguments, I am with him in that opinion. The paper is too long and important to be properly reviewed in a few lines, and I am sorry I have not more space at my disposal for the purpose.

A new method of loading the cavalry carbine is being adopted in the French army. The weapon will be provided with a detachable magazine holding three cartridges and loading automatically. The discharge of one cartridge causes the next to fall into position for firing, while the empty cartridge case is thrown out by the same action. It is said that the apparatus is the invention of a railway employee. At the forthcoming French manœuvres a larger scale map will be issued to all officers than has been the case in former years. Last year the general officers only had maps on a scale of 1-80,000, while the regimental officers used maps on a scale of 1-320,000. This year all officers will be supplied with the larger scale maps, which will be a great and much-needed improvement.

Whilst willing to admit that there are many genuine cases of influenza about, I cannot help coming to the conclusion that in not a few instances an ordinary cold is magnified into an attack of the fashionable complaint. If a man is suffering from a simple cold he gets very little sympathy, but the moment his malady is described as influenza his name appears in the papers and he becomes quite an important personage. This temptation to exaggeration is more than some people can withstand. As I said at the outset there can be no doubt as to the prevalence of the epidemic, but when a Member of Parliament, apparently in robust health, prefers the modest request that to-morrow his name shall be given amongst the published list of invalids, a little scepticism is pardonable.

ORIGINAL ENGLISH.

A Board School teacher has recently published a book under the above title in which are to be found some amusing examples of "English as she is spoke." For instance, the examiner asked for examples of diminutives such as "manikin," and at once got "lambkin."

"Very good, indeed," said the Inspector; and he pointed to another lad.

"Tomkin, a little Tom," was the answer.

The gentleman somewhat demurred at this, but finally accepted it. He then pointed to a further lad.

"Buskin, a little 'bus," was the response.

The Inspector's countenance fell.

"Now, my lads," he pleaded, "do take time to think before you speak. The last answer was altogether wrong."

And he pointed to a little yokel behind, who, in his desperate eagerness to catch the Inspector's eye, had ventured to half mount upon the form.

"Well, you, my lad," said the Inspector, pointing at last to this young hopeful.

"Pumpkin, sir, a little pump!"