

THE NATION'S PRAYER.

"Call upon me in time of trouble,"
—Psalm 50 c. 1 v.

Almighty God of Sabl aoth,
Our hope in time of need,
Whose ears are always open
When wo thy creatures plead.
We thank thee thou hast heard us
Thy love which never falls
Has turned our grief to gladness—
"God save the Prince of Wales."

Restore him, Lord, restore him,
To health and strength again
And when it is thy pleasure
May he long o'er us reign
To wield the sword with power
And balance well the scales
Dispensing truth and justice,
"God bless the Prince of Wales."

Comfort the Royal Princess,
Assuage her poignant grief,
And let the promise in thy word
Come forth to her relief
That thou wilt be a present help
When human effort fails
To strengthen and console her
"God bless the Prince of Wales."

To our beloved and gracious Queen
Thy special grace impart
To guide her midst the darkest gloom
And sanctify her heart.
Long may she reign and happy be
Spite of Odger, Dilke and Beales.
Confound her enemies, Oh Lord,
"And bless the Prince of Wales."

Newbliss, Co. Monaghan. }
Ireland, Dec. 29, 1871.

J. W.

THE "EIGHTEEN MANŒUVRES."

I have all my life been hearing of the "Eighteen Manœuvres" of Dundas, and coming upon a full description of them recently in that curious storehouse of miscellaneous knowledge, "Rees' Encyclopædia." I think some of your readers may be as curious as I was to know what they really were, I shall, therefore, attempt, with your permission, to condense the account in question, omitting small details, but giving enough to show any Volunteer who understands the present battalion drill what it was at the beginning of the century. With the help of "Rees" there is no difficulty in doing this. The article, "Battalion," which is dated 1819, but which I apprehend must have been compiled some years previously, not only comprises the description of the "Eighteen Manœuvres," but the full details of squad, company, and battalion drill, prefaced by the expression of a hope that "at a crisis like the present" the account of the training of the recruit for service, the order and formation of the battalion, and the principal evolutions it was destined to execute, would not prove unacceptable. While fully agreeing with the Editor's views, I cannot help wondering whether, if an encyclopædia had been published in 1860, it would have occurred to its compilers to reprint the whole "Red-book" for the benefit of its Volunteer readers.

The "Eighteen Manœuvres" constituted apparently a ready-made programme for the inspection of a battalion and were, it will be seen, so contrived that, at the end of every two or three sets of movements, at the most, the battalion was brought back to its original ground in line, facing the reviewing officer, who is throughout assumed to remain motionless in one spot. I gather from the marks in the Encyclopædia that it was not essential that all the manœuvres should be executed, but that the regiment should be prepared to execute such as might be order-

ed. The notion of a cut-and-dried programme of this sort was not altogether extinct even a few years ago; for when I was attached as a Volunteer officer to the 1st Battalion of the 60th Rifles, in the year 1863, they had a private manual of company drill, which was always gone through in its entirety at every parade, the movements always following one another in exactly the same order.

Before commencing the account of the manœuvres, it will be well to say a few words on the formation of the battalion and the general principles on which it was worked; though these, indeed, are so like those that Volunteers learned twelve years ago, that they will not require much explanation. The battalion, when the Eighteen Manœuvres were in fashion, consisted of ten companies, with the same officers and sergeants that we have at present. Each company had (as it appears on a peace footing) sixty rank and file, and as three ranks were formed, would, if all were present, only stand twenty in front. As, of course, it would never really be so strong as this on parade, we find a provision made for forming only two ranks. When the companies were on a war footing, they were probably much stronger, and then each company was divided into "platoons," which worked, I fancy, very much as independent companies, just as the Prussian *Züge* now work. The right and left companies of the line were the Grenadier and light companies, just as they were up to, or shortly before the Crimean War. The other companies were numbered from one to eight. This arrangement causes, at first, a little confusion in reading the directions, because one is apt to forget that when No. 1 Company is spoken of it means that standing second from the right of the line or the head of a column. I need scarcely say that all the movements are so contrived that the order of the companies is never changed, except from right to left in front. The places and duties of the officers and sergeants are very much the same as they were before the publication of the 1870 Drill-book. The companies being three deep, all movements to a flank were done in file. The length of step was thirty inches, and in "ordinary time," in which most movements were made, 75 steps were taken in a minute; "quick time," 103 steps of thirty inches, was used for filing from line into column, and from column into line, and "quickest time," 120 steps of thirty inches, for all wheelings and a few other movements.

The preliminary proceedings at a review or inspection offer no great speciality. The reviewing officer was received just as he is at the present day, except that the colonel and lieutenant-colonel did not mount their horses till the regiment broke into column to march past. The march past was first in ordinary (i. e. slow) time, with ranks at open order and officers in front, and afterwards in quick time, with closed ranks, but also in open column. The men turned their eyes to the right in passing the saluting point, which must have made the marching difficult. I may remark, also, that the second senior mounted officer, the lieutenant colonel, rode, in marching past, in rear of the battalion, where the junior major now rides. The major rode on the left and in rear of the commanding officer, as the senior major does at present. After the march past the regiment was wheeled into line, and the major (not the second in command, the lieutenant colonel) put the men through the manual and platoon. Muskets were then loaded, and all was ready for the performance of the Eighteen Manœuvres, or so many of them as were ordered.

1st MANŒUVRE.—*Close column on a rear division.*—Close column was first formed in rear of the right company (the Grenadiers) exactly as it would be now formed, except that, as always, the movement was made by files instead of by fours. Column of grand divisions was then formed, the left companies filing to their left and moving upon the left of the right companies. All the supernumeraries moved to the rear of the column at the beginning of this movement. The grand divisions were then closed to the front to one pace distance. The caution was then given—"The column will take ground to the right, and on its march deploy on the rear grand division." The column was then moved off in files to the right, for twenty or thirty paces, and then the rear grand division, and each other division in succession, were halted and fronted by the colonel. The deployments, as all deployments on a rear or central division, were conducted on the principles familiar to most of us a very few years ago, the order of the companies remaining unchanged, and the division of formation moving up as soon as its front was clear into the front base. With this deployment the First Manœuvre concluded, the line being formed on a prolongation of the original alignment to the right.

2nd MANŒUVRE.—*Close column on a division.*—A very few words will suffice for this manœuvre, inasmuch as the movements are a repetition of those in the first Manœuvre, except that the close column is formed in front of the left company (the light infantry) and the column of grand divisions when formed moves to the left and deploys on the front division. The line would then be formed at a distance equal to the depth of a close column of companies in advance of the original alignment.

3rd MANŒUVRE.—*Close column on a central division, facing to the rear.*—A close column left in front, facing to the rear, was first formed on the right centre company, each company countermarching; then the companies were again countermarched by files, so as to bring the column right in front, facing the general. But to do this from close column, the left companies had to lead out of the column to the left to give room, filing into their places again after the countermarch. The battalion then deploys on the right centre company, and would be still parallel to its original alignment, but nearer to the general by the depth of half the close column than at the end of the Second Manœuvre.

4th MANŒUVRE.—*Change of position in open column.*—The battalion breaks into open column right in front, the column advances, changes direction to the left, and halts when about three companies have wheeled, the rear companies filing into the new alignment. The battalion then wheels into line. The new line is on the left of the general, and intersects the old one. The only point to remark upon in this manœuvre is that the change of direction necessitates the planting of three camp colours—one at the wheeling point, the second and third in front and rear of it—to determine the new alignment. The captain of the leading company rarely gives the word "Forward," when he sees by the camp colour that a sufficiently large arc has been wheeled. I may also notice that in breaking into open column the companies actually wheeled backwards, and were not turned about.

* I give the titles of the manœuvres as they are printed in Rees. But I should have thought that these titles should have been transposed, unless close column on a rear division is an ellipse for close column deploying on a rear division.