

ALONE.

[Orpheus C. Kerr, (R. H. Newell) is well known as an extravagant humorist, but the following from his volume of serious, entitled "Palace, Beautiful and Other Poems," exhibits another side of his mind.]

Three stalwart sons old Sweyn the Saxon, had,
Brave, hardy lads for battle on the chase;
And though, like peasant, barbarously clad
Each wore the nameless in his face;
One o'er another rose their heads in tiers,
Steps for their father's honorable years.

One night in Autumn sat they round the fire,
In the round cabin bountiful of Home;
Mild was the reverence due from child to sire,
Bold in the manhood of mastery came;
Working their tasks o'er huntsman's forest gear
Loos'ning the bow and sharpening the spear.

Lost in his thoughts old Sweyn, the Saxon stood
Leaning in silence 'gainst the chimney stone;
Staring unconscious at the blazing wood,
Steeped in the mood of mind he oft had known
As an old tree, whose stoutest branches shake,
Scarce from their sign of life will take.

Athol, the bearded, with his bow and done,
Alfred, the nimble, laid his spear aside,
Edrie, the fairest, tiring of his fun,
Left the old hound to slumber on his hide;
Yet was their sire like one whose features seem
Shaded by sleep, and all their light a dream.

Bold in the favor of the eldest born,
Athol, for both his younger brothers, spoke;
"Father, the fox is prowling in the corn,
And hear the night owl hooting from the oak
Let us to couch." But Sweyn had raised his head
And thus unwitting what has passed he said:

"See from my breast I draw this chain of gold;"
Fair in the firelight royally it shone,—
"This for his honor that shall best unfold
Who of all the creatures, is most Alone;
Take him from palace, monastery or cot,
Loving, unloved, forgetting, or forgot."

Then Athol spoke, with thoughtful tone and look
"He is the loneliest—most Alone of all
Who, in a skiff to the midseas forsook,
Finds not an echo, even to his call;
If echo lived not all, alone were he;
But there's no echo on the solemn sea!"

And Alfred next:—"But lonelier, brother, far
The wretch that flies a just avenging rod,
To him all scenes are waste, a foe the star,
All earth he's lost, yet knows no heav'n, no
God;
Most Lonely he, making man his foe,
Unto man's Maker darest not go!"

Thus spoke the lads, with wit beyond their years
And yet the old man held his beard and sigh'd
As one who gains the form his wishing wears,
But misses still a something most denied:
Upon his youngest eager looks he turned,
And Edrie's cheek with grace ingenuous
burned

"I think my father," and his tone was low,
"That lonelier yet and most Alone is he,
Scarce taught, tho' crowds are landing where to
go
And one face missing, can no other see;
Though all the Norman's court 'round him
moves
He is alone apart from Her he loves."

A hush fell on them. Then with loving air
And all the touching romance of the Old,
The hoary father kiss'd young Edrie's hair,
And o'er his shoulders threw the chain of gold;
Then fell upon his darling's neck and cried:
"I have been lonely since thy mother died!"

We publish below an article from the United States Army and Navy Journal of 11th Sept., on "Breechloaders" in which the comparative merits of *Sporting* rifles are ably discussed and much valuable information given on the subject. But our contemporary seems to forget that military considerations as well as physical and practical obstacles restrict military rifles to a range of *five to six hundred yards*, and therefore the English practice is in this case the correct one.

The article will afford our readers an insight into what the ideas of experts amongst our neighbours are, and it would be well for those who have time and the means at their disposal to investigate the subject of the

value of *long range* for musketry practice in a military point of view.

It is quite clear that the main principle in this case is practicability, and all efforts should be made to attain the greatest possible perfection under the conditions as to range of human vision—mechanical appliances can be had sufficiently perfect to follow that to its ultimate limits—beyond that they are useless as far as small arms are concerned.

BREECHLOADERS.

When the muzzle loader, as a military weapon, had been entirely superseded by the more rapid rifle charged at the breech, it still remained the prejudice, fashion or opinion in England, that for long range work the breechloader was deficient in accuracy. Up to 600 yards, in the Queen's Prize match, the old Snider was used; but in the latter stages, at 800 and 1,000 yards, the muzzle-loading Whitworth or Metford has from the first supplanted it. The new weapon of England, the Martini-Henry rifle, is expected to change all this, being represented as accurate up to 800 yards; but there seems to be a good deal of trouble with this famous gun, on account of its tremendous recoil, and the battle over its adoption has hardly yet terminated. The only real and substantial triumph gained by modern breechloaders, when put in competition with muzzle loaders, was that gained at Dollymount by the Sharps and Remington Creedmoor rifles shooting against one of the very best muzzle loaders to be found in the British Islands. Up to the opening of Creedmoor, or very shortly before it, no serious attempt had been made by manufacturers of breechloading firearms to produce a weapon able to hold its own for accuracy at 1,000 yards. Thitherto the rifles made had been coarse, clumsy military pieces, or hunting rifles, only differing from the military class by having less stock and no bayonet stud. While many were nominally sighted up to 800 yards, the divisions on the hausse were for the most part theoretical, and the cartridges themselves did not contain enough powder to carry the bullet beyond four hundred yards or sometimes six, with any accuracy. Good enough at short range, at half a mile they were useless, and yet all this was soon to be changed by the adoption of a simple improvement. The substitution of the Berdan Brass Central Fire Cartridge, with its solid head, movable primer and faculty of reloading for the old copper rim fire concern was the real starting point of modern practical breechloading firearms on the road to success, and that success has been so great as to compel all the world to follow it. From the Berdan Brass Central Fire Shell sprang the Sharps and Remington Creedmoor rifles, and the victory of Dollymount.

Theoretically speaking, there is no reason why rifle loading at the breech should not be just as accurate as one loading at the muzzle. Practically, we find that after 500 or 600 yards the accuracy of the military breechloaders falls off, and it is only with Sharps and Remington Creedmoors that one may hope for constant success beyond that distance, against a muzzle-loader. One reason of this is that the military cartridges only carry a charge adequate to five hundred yards. The other reason has been lately investigated, and reveals itself to be more serious than is generally supposed, being nothing less than carelessness of manufacture, and especially *want of correspond-*

ence between the chamber of the gun and the cartridge therein inserted.

The theory of the brass central fire cartridge is well known and simple. It is that brass, being a strong and somewhat elastic metal, will stand the shock of a heavy charge, and that its head will serve as a perfect gas check. A properly made brass shell is supposed to stand any amount of reloading, and to be always safe from bursting and leak-fire. The experience of Creedmoor has, however, taught many there that these assumptions are not always safe. Cartridges are sometimes found to stick, when being extracted, showing that the limit of elasticity of the brass has been passed, and that the metal has yielded to the strain, as copper used to in the days of rim fire. Occasionally, in fact not very infrequently, a cartridge leaks fire backward, and the accidents to faces and eyes from this cause have produced in many minds a prejudice against the class of rifles represented by the Remington and Whitney, inasmuch as those guns afford no protection against a mischance of this kind. In the Sharps, Ward Burton, Peabody, and guns of the bolt or lever class, there is not so much danger from a leak-fire, as it goes upwards and not backwards, and this advantage has weighed heavily with many in adopting a rifle for personal use. A series of late experiments made by an expert in the cartridge business, and very kindly furnished to us for the benefit of the rifle shooting public, assign a very reasonable cause for most of these accidents, and suggest a very simple remedy.

When the first Berdan cartridges were made in this country for the Russian rifles of 42 cal., a very careful series of experiments was made by general Gorloff, resulting in the present well-known long bottle-necked cartridge, the model of all our long range cartridges. It was then decided, by experiment, that the extreme limit of variation between the size of the brass cartridge and that of the chamber that contained it, should be .003 of an inch. The exceeding of that limit produced an undue strain of the brass, and always terminated in a rupture sooner or later. The uneven qualities of different lots of brass have of course some influence on the strength of a cartridge, but the general rule was found to hold good that a chamber which did not exceed the diameter of the cartridge by more than .003 of an inch would hold the cartridge and preserve it from rupture. With the Berdan cartridges used in Russia under these restrictions, the very best results have been obtained for uniformity of fire, and misses, leaks and ruptures are alike unknown, while the only trouble ever experienced has been in an occasional bad piece of brass, against which no precaution has yet proved totally reliable.

The next army gun that was used with a central fire brass bottle-necked cartridge was the Spanish Remington calibre .433 or 11 millimeters, and this gun was followed by the Peabody and the Whitney, of the same calibre, using the same cartridges. Here the real trouble began, for no gun that we are acquainted with has given so much trouble as this same 43 cal. gun so called. The original cartridge for this gun measured .517 at the head, .459 at the mouth, and the limit of size of chamber should have been, on the principles settled by the Gorloff experiments, from .518 to .520 at the head, .460 to .462 at the mouth. Instead of this, actual measurement reveals the following discrepancies in three different guns, taken at random, and averaged from numerous experiments: