

### THE SAILOR BOYS FAREWELL.

(We know not to whom belongs the authorship of the following lines—but all will agree with us in saying that nautical phrase never was more beautifully interwoven in sentiment of the heart's best love for those we cherish with the highest, holiest and purest affection.

Farewell to father—blessed hulk,  
In spite of metal, spite of bulk,  
His cable soon may slip;  
Yet while the parting tear is moist,  
The flag of gratitude I'll hoist  
In duty to the ship.

Farewell to mother—first class she—  
Who launched me on life's stormy sea,  
And rigged me fore and aft;  
May Providence her timbers spare,  
And keep her hulk in good repair,  
To tow the smaller craft.

Farewell to sister—lovely yacht;  
But whether she'll be manned or not,  
I cannot now foresee;  
May some good ship a tender prove,  
Well found in stores of truth and love,  
And take her under lee.

Farewell to George—the jolly boat—  
And all the little craft's craft;  
In homo's delightful bay,  
When they arrive at sailing age  
May wisdom prove the weather gauge  
And guide them on their way.

Farewell to all on life's rude main,  
And though we may ne'er meet again  
Through stress or stormy weather,  
Yet summoned by the Board above,  
We'll anchor in the port of love,  
And all be moored together.

### THE EMPLOYMENT OF MITRAILLEURS DURING THE RECENT WAR, AND THEIR USE IN FUTURE WARS.

By Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Fletcher, Scots Fusilier Guards.

(Continued from Page 143.)

Captain Henry Brackenbury corroborates much that was said by Captain Gurdon, but reduces the effective ranges of the mitrailleuse to about 1,000 yards, possibly alluding to a weapon of less calibre. He had the advantage of noticing their destructive powers when well placed, and inefficiency in the hands of those who were ignorant of their proper use. The description he gives of the battle of Sedan presents so vivid a picture of mitrailleurs when well handled, that I hope I shall be excused if I quote it from his evidence. "Two or three days after the battle of Sedan, I was (he says) on the field: they had not long finished burying the dead. I was very much struck with the number of graves at one point, just between Douzy and Bazailles. I made enquires, and was told that great havoc had been committed there by some French mitrailleurs. It was pointed out to me where the battery of mitrailleurs had been in action, and I went there and found that evidently a battery had been in action, and for a considerable period, because there was a great number of empty mitrailleuse boxes lying about. I noticed in the first place that the position they had taken up was one that appeared to be splendid for the use of the mitrailleurs. It was just on the crest of very slightly undulating ground in a perfectly open field: they had a sort of glacis in front of them, extending down perhaps 800 or 900 yards and a gentle hill opposite, extending for 600 or 700 more. The crest of the opposite hill, the rise all being slight, was about 1,300 or 1,400 yards off. It was at this distance that they had done great execution." Subsequently he witnessed the employment of the mitrailleurs by the insurgents at Paris, who fired from the forts of Issy and Vauves at a range of 1,650

yards with very little effect. Captain Brackenbury concurs generally with the other evidence that mitrailleurs are suited for purposes of defence, and although he does not consider that an army provided with these weapons holds any very great advantage over its opponent who relies on field artillery, yet he believes them to be a valuable adjunct to that arm, and instances as a proof that the French Marshal commanding the 6th Corps regretted their absence from the right of the position at Gravelotte, and that the Prussian Officers looked on them with marked respect, and when called to face them, with decided aversion.

Mr. Charles Coffey witnessed the employment of mitrailleuse with great effect against a line of advancing Prussians at the action at Sillé le Guillaume, and coincides with the opinion of the French Artillery Officers with whom he spoke, that they were very valuable in war.

Major-General Walker, C.B., who was present with the German armies during the campaign, evidently agrees with the Prussian Staff in his opinion on the merits or rather demerits of the mitrailleurs. He sees no place for them in European warfare, as he believes them to be inferior to artillery, especially when good shrapnel shells are employed. He acknowledges their possible value against undisciplined troops badly provided with artillery, and in purely defensive positions, where the opponent is forced to advance on a fixed and narrow front, but deprecates any diminution in their favour of field artillery, and does not think that it is desirable to encumber infantry movements by attaching them to that branch of the service.

Colonel Hamley, who critically examined the evidence for and against the mitrailleurs condemns them absolutely for offensive operations, where, as must almost always be the case, the attack is to be preceded by a concentrated fire of artillery. Even for defensive purposes, in an open country, he considers that the effect, owing to their shorter range, would be less than that of artillery, but on the other hand, in certain positions where the area of attack is limited to 1,200 yards, and when the enemy is approaching on a narrow front, they might be most usefully employed.

On the German side there is but one solitary instance of the employment of the revolving cannon, a description of mitrailleuse placed under the command of Captain Count Thurheim, and attached to the Bavarian corps of Van der Tann. The mechanism of these guns appear to have been defective, and Count Thurheim, after experience of their power, restricts their employment solely to defensive purposes in entrenched positions.

In giving this summary of the evidence taken by Colonel Wray's Committee, I must guard myself from accusation of endeavouring to force conclusions by quoting only so much as would prove a case for or against the mitrailleuse. I have endeavoured fairly to convey the impression produced by the several witnesses, but I would recommend all who are interested in the subject, carefully to study the evidence for themselves, as it is almost impossible by selecting particular passages, to convey a perfectly correct impression of the whole.

The deductions from its perusal appear to be as follows: 1. That the French Officers and those who have witnessed the campaign from the French side, are generally in favour of the employment of mitrailleurs in the field. 2. That the Prussian Staff disapprove of their introduction into the army, except

for the very limited service of the defence of the ditches of fortresses. 3. That the English Officers, who were present with the German Armies, are with one exception of opinion that for certain purposes they may be useful adjuncts to field artillery. 4. Almost all who advocate their use, consider that they should form part of the artillery of an army, that they should supplement that arm, and that their place lies in defensive rather than in offensive tactics. 5. That their proper employment had not, possibly from want of opportunity, been carefully studied by French Officers previous to the war, and consequently that they were frequently unprofitably used. 6. That although the mitrailleuse or Gatling (for both were employed by the French) of larger calibre was superior in range to the lighter arm, yet that owing to its increased weight, the horses necessary for its transport would nearly equal in number those of a field gun, and consequently that its advantages being more than counterbalanced by this drawback, a field gun would be preferred.

#### Second Report of Colonel Wray's Committee.

After duly weighing the evidence—of which I have endeavoured to give a summary—Colonel Wray's Committee draw up a second Report, on the 21st November, 1871, in which they laid down distinctly, that the mitrailleurs should be treated purely as defensive weapons, and that they should in general be entrenched and kept, as far as possible, masked from artillery fire. That the so-called small Gatling of 45 calibre, of which the destructive effect against troops in the open at ranges up to 1,400 yards, is estimated as being nearly three times that of the 9 pounder field gun, should be so lightened as to be easily drawn with its carriage and ammunition by two horses, and on emergency, by one. That the field artillery should not be reduced by a single man or horse for the sake of substituting mitrailleurs; but that these latter should be kept with the reserves of an Army in the field for the express purpose of increasing infantry fire at critical moments, in the same way that guns of position are used for strengthening the fire of field artillery. That the mitrailleuse batteries should be provided with Nolan's range-finders.

With reference to the difference in opinion on these subjects between the German and French Officers, the Committee offer the following remarks, which I would recommend for your consideration:—"1. That the Gatling gun was very little used by the French. 2. That the French mitrailleuse was almost as heavy, and required as many men and horses as the field gun. 3. That the French appear, by all accounts, to have used their mitrailleurs with little judgment, firing them into all sorts of cover, at very long ranges, and without any special means of ascertaining the distances. They seem also to have frequently neglected the precaution of covering their mitrailleurs, either naturally or artificially, thus laying them open to destruction by the German artillery. 4. That the Germans had no opportunity of testing the merits of mitrailleurs for defensive purposes, having almost invariably acted on the offensive. 5. (and I would draw especial attention to this remark). That the Germans have no necessity for considering the question of introducing these weapons, being already well provided with a very large number of French mitrailleurs, which, having recently been tried at Berlin in comparison with Montigny and Gatling mitrailleurs, have been unanimously pronounced superior to either." An opinion,