

The New "Red Book."—IV.

(Volunteer Service Gazette.)

Except that the movements in double companies and double columns and those of advancing in column from either flank and retiring in column from one flank in rear of the other are done away with, there are few changes in the regulations for Brigade drill in close formation. Wheeling from line into mass and from mass into line of quarter columns may be done on the march. And the few pages on the drill of divisions or larger bodies require no comment. But we now come to the important second division of the book, styled "Manœuvre," which is prefaced by the following remarks:

Application of Drill to Manœuvre.—Manœuvre represents the application of the drill to the circumstances of supposed or actual conflict with an enemy. The only means by which officers and men can become efficient in readily adapting drill instructions to the varying conditions of the field manœuvres, is by the constant exercise of companies acting independently.

A marked difference should be made between parades for drill and those for field manœuvre. In the former, great accuracy should be insisted on; in the latter, the delay, and fatigue to the men, caused by minute dressing and correcting intervals, should be avoided.

Exactitude should never be permitted to impede the execution of a movement when rapidity is essential; nor should too rigid an observance of the regulated intervals be allowed to destroy the elasticity of the movement for which those intervals provide. Accuracy of alignment should unhesitatingly be sacrificed where configuration of ground can advantageously be followed in the disposition of troops. Tactics should be studied rather than drill, accidents of ground rather than precision.

Each file, or in rank entire, each man is to have a front of 30 inches when manœuvring—*i. e.*, there is to be no "touch." And in closing the formation of fours, &c., the side step and the covering pace must be adjusted to this increased front. "Otherwise the instructions for drill are applicable to manœuvre. If men at drill are required to take the increased front allowed for manœuvre or *vice versa*, they will do so on the march."

When a company has been carefully instructed in Part II. (Company Drill), it is to be exercised in the various movements with the increased front and actual points. "Generally speaking, the duties of guides in manœuvre are as described in Parts II. and III. (Company and Battalion Drill), but they will give the words *Eyes front* to their companies in line formations immediately the alignment is attained. Markers will not give points unless specially ordered."

The duties of the officers and markers in a "battalion" "manœuvring" are also quite different to those they have to perform at "drill." "Points" are to be given up altogether in "manœuvre." The Major, instead of covering guides and markers, is to "be responsible that all movements are correctly executed." In the rest of the "General Rules" which open the chapters on "Manœuvre" there is not much that is novel. And the same may be said of the chapter which follows, on "Route Marching."

The next part is on "Tactics as influenced by fire." It appears to be excellent and deserving of close study, but it would be useless to give extracts from it. We may, however, quote the first paragraph, which is as follows:—

"Necessity of peace training for War.—The more carefully troops are trained to do during peace what will be required of them in time of war, the more efficient they will prove when they take the field. It is a recognised fact that men who are in ordinary times taught and frequently practised to act in a particular manner, will, from acquired habit, under somewhat similar conditions, do the same in moments of great mental strain, and will, even under heavy fire, act, as it were instinctively, according to well-established custom."

The above statement is, we believe, quite true; but it seems to us that it is impossible to harmonise it with the principle laid down earlier in the book, by which the training of the parade ground is made quite different from that of the field of manœuvre or of battle.

We then come to Advanced and Rear Guards and Outposts, which are dealt with at considerable length, and very clearly. Part VIII. is on Skirmishing, Attack and Defence, and Umpire Regulations. The word "skirmishing" is, it will be observed, re-introduced, and the system seems very much that in use many years ago. The skirmishing drill (if we may venture to call anything in the second division of the book by that name) is, of course the basis for the fighting formations which are described in the next chapter on "Attack and Defence." The scheme of attack appears to be substantially the same as that tried by Sir A. Alison at Aldershot last autumn, and described in the *V. S. G.* of September 8th, 1888. "Operations by Night," take up a great deal of space in the new book, and are described with the most careful minuteness. The book ends with a bulky "miscellaneous" section, which

opens with the directions for Reviews, Trooping the Colours, etc., quite in the old shape. There are chapters on shelter-trench exercise, and on the annual course of "military training," which every company of Regular Infantry needs to undergo under its own officers.

The book will, it would appear from the Army Orders of this month, be speedily issued, if it has not yet been issued, to all her Majesty's Infantry. In these articles we have addressed ourselves less to criticism than to the task of telling our readers what they will really find in the new work. But we cannot end without expressing our great admiration of the very thorough way in which the compilers of the book have done their work. The principle on which the system of training is based appears to us to be a wrong one, but too much praise cannot be given to the accuracy and clearness of the descriptions, the exhaustiveness of the regulations, and the valuable little treatises on fire tactics in "la petite guerre" which are contained in the fat little volume before us.

THE NEW RIFLE AND BAYONET EXERCISE.

The new "Rifle Exercises" is to contain "Physical drill with arms," as worked out in the Gymnasium at Aldershot; and a new bayonet exercise devised by Col. Fox. The "physical drill" without arms, which takes the place of "extension motions" in the new infantry drill-book is a preparation for the "physical drill with arms," the object of which is to supple and straighten the whole frame by using the rifle as a bar-bell.

In the new bayonet exercise all the guards and points are of a practical nature. The old head parry has been done away with, as it only left the soldier in a position of defence for the head, and exposed his body for a point. The shorten arms has been changed. In the new position the soldier has more chance of defending himself, and greater power in delivering his points. Some people consider the throw point too much for a young and weak man, but it must be clearly understood that before using this (especially with a fixed bayonet), he must have strengthened his arms by the preliminary exercises in physical drill with arms, especially fifth practice. The object of the throw point is to gain greater reach, and is used when by using the ordinary point the adversary is out of reach. It has generally been considered that after the recruits (all of whom have to go through a three months' course of gymnastics, one hour a day), have finished their course of gymnastics, and go back to their regimental drill, their physical training and condition is neglected. This physical drill with arms, together with quick marching and running drill, keeps them up to the mark as regards wind and condition generally, and is to be carried on regimentally.

THE PROMULGATING ORDER.

The following is the text of the "Army Order" announcing the new Manual of Infantry Drill:

1. A revised edition of the "Field Exercise and Evolutions of Infantry," which will in future be styled the "Manual of Infantry Drill," has been published, and will shortly be issued to all concerned.

2. His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief has received the Queen's commands to require of officers a scrupulous adherence to the system of drill and manœuvre now promulgated. The careful training of the soldier in ordinary times by those whose duty it will be to direct his fire and lead him in action has become of paramount importance.

3. These regulations are based on the principle of demanding great exactitude in the simplified movements still retained for drill, while conceding the utmost latitude to all commanders, of however small a unit, in manœuvre. The first must be carried out literally, the second must be observed in the spirit more than in the letter.

4. The very process by which the rank and file are gradually imbued with a feeling of confidence, when called upon to act more or less upon their individual judgment, will create the discipline essential to success.

5. It is to the appreciation by General Officers Commanding of these vital points, and to their realising the altered conditions of modern warfare, that his Royal Highness looks for the efficient preparation of Infantry for the practical requirements of the battle-field.

6. General Orders 28, 41, and 94, of 1885, are hereby cancelled. Regulations for Musketry Instruction, 1887. Alterations and additions.—Alterations in, and additions to, the Regulations for Musketry Instruction, 1887, have been approved, and will be issued to all concerned.

Major-General Oliver, the new C. M. G., is an Englishman by birth. He was born at Ashby-de-la-Zouch in 1834. He became a professor at the Royal Military College at Kingston in 1877; colonel in 1885, and in the following year Commandant of the college, and subsequently a major-general. Major-General Oliver's term of office as Commandant of the college expired last mid-summer, when Major-General Cameron was appointed to the post.