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A NEW RED BOOK.

The anticipated new Manual of Infantry Drill has just been issued by the Imperial authorities, and the radical changes there announced make the book one of special interest. Many of the changes were semi-officially declared last summer, and as thus foreshadowed may be found in our files; but for convenience we shall now publish (as before, from the columns of the *Volunteer Service Gazette*) a complete review of the work as it actually appears. The series of these articles will appear week by week until completion. Even now the authorities are not quite decided about the changes authorized, and the Manual is styled "Provisional."

A feature as remarkable as it is commendable is the advance made in the assimilation of barrack square drill to that required for purposes of manœuvre. In the last revision in, 1889, the soldier was told that he must rely upon "touch" in order to march across the barrack yard, but on open ground must move quite independently; that every assistance in the way of "points" would be given in order that mathematically accurate lines, &c., might be formed on the level ground, but that these aids would be withdrawn when the far more important operation of manœuvring in the open country was taken in hand. Now the soldier occupies the same lateral space on parade in the barrack yard that he does in the field—27 inches—and must, therefore, always march without "touch." And it is especially laid down that markers are not to move out except when they are specially ordered to do so, which, we are told, will be very seldom. Thus the Infantry is to learn to execute the few simple movements retained for battalions in close formations without the aid of "points."

Another important novelty is the introduction of the "group" system. The very

day a recruit joins an Infantry regiment "he will be told off to the smallest fire unit (either a section or sub-section), be quartered with it, and when dismissed drill will perform with it all guards, fatigues, and other duties, as far as can be arranged." In order that this system may be fully carried out, no equalizing or mixing of companies, "except for purposes of ceremony," is to be permitted, and when the battalion is in line, not only the companies, but even the fire units are to be separated by intervals from each other. The movements of the battalion are, for the most part simplified, and when in line each company, except that of direction, marches by its own centre. The distance between the ranks is increased to sixty inches, so that "fours" can be formed without the rear rank having to step back. These are the principal changes in the system of close formation.

REVOLVER COMPETITIONS.

Strictly speaking it may be no part of the business of a "rifle" association to concern itself about revolver practice. But as the rifle meetings everywhere are attended so largely by officers and others whose weapon is the revolver rather than the rifle, the associations have acted the useful part of auxiliaries for encouraging the attainment of proficiency with the former also. True, the work has been gone about in a very half-hearted manner, and the revolver competitions at our central meetings have been very tame indeed—the least interesting of all being that at the D.R.A. meeting last year, when only about ten or twelve competed. The reason for this complete lack of interest was the adoption of the rule calling for nothing less than the immense calibre of .44, and a 7½ inch barrel. This announced attempt to popularise the use of a "strictly military" weapon having so signally failed, it behoves the executive of the D.R.A.

either to declare that the revolver match serves no useful purpose and will not have a place in the programme, or else to take steps to popularise it.

The National Rifle Association is naturally and properly followed by ours in nearly every respect concerning the firing conditions; and if no exception were made of the revolver competition we believe there would be very general satisfaction. In England hitherto the fault has been rather a lack of definite restriction, this year an improvement has been made, which still leaves the conditions sufficiently liberal to satisfy all. There are two classes of weapons provided for. The first comprises military revolvers (bead sights not allowed); the second, any revolver of not less calibre than .32, with no restrictions as to weight, length of barrel, sights or ammunition. A minimum trigger pull of four pounds is called for for both classes.

The English target also is more closely defined than before, and is found rather more liberal than ours. It is to be circular, on a square card, with six divisions counting respectively from 7 to 2 marks, and in diameter 2, 3, 4½, 6½, 9½ and 12 inches. On our target there are seven divisions, counting from 7 to 1 point, and in diameter respectively 1¾, 2¾, 4, 5¼, 7, 9¼ and 12½ inches.

It is specially provided that "No claim for a second bullet having passed through a previous bullet-hole without leaving any trace of a second circle shall be allowed until some method is devised by which such passage of a second bullet can be clearly proved.

THE CONCESSION TO RETIRED VOLUNTEERS.

The announcement recently made that the National Rifle Association had decided to allow Retired Volunteers to compete, under certain conditions, in the military