

square, in railway transport, or in ordinary road marching. The point of failure is, for the most part, the axle. This has broken at the place where a socket hole of 2·75 inches diameter is formed in it to receive the pivot of the traversing gear, and no artillery officer can feel any confidence that a single one of all these 108 carriages would survive ten minutes' travel over any really rough ground.

Mr. Brodrick, replying to a question in the House of Commons on February 28 last, admits that "fourteen axles have cracked in travelling, and the carriages have been returned to Woolwich" to be fitted with new axles. He does not say, as he should have said, that only a small number have been issued to the service at all; but leaves it to be inferred that the fourteen are the only cases of failure out of the whole order. The breaking of an axle, involving as it does the falling of the gun on the ground, is an irreparable disaster. Not only would the gun be flung out of action, but it must of necessity be abandoned then and there; and this is the accident of which the Secretary of State for War speaks so light-heartedly that one would imagine it was the scraping of a little paint that was being discussed. *Ex pede Herculem*, we shall now be able to appraise more accurately the true value of Mr. Brodrick's remarks when he speaks of "the threads of some of the breech screws having become burred, owing to the guns being used for drill purposes, without drill cartridges—a slight damage which can be repaired locally." We hope the damage may be indeed as slight as the Secretary of State would have us believe. The point is of too technical a nature to be here discussed, but in any case the artillerist will recognise in the statement that the German design has failed to foresee a difficulty which has been specifically provided against in the English Government pattern.

We shall not discuss the gun as apart from the carriage, because we hope to revert to it at some later period, when extended experiments have given more proof of its value. We must be content for the present to rely on the assurance