

Common Sense on Parade, or Drill Without Stays.

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(*Continued from page 467.*)

WELL then, if this be so, it is not too much to say that to give men their steady training with touch, instead of in an order with intervals, is unphilosophical and absurd. It is only defended by the argument that you must first make men steady, and that this you cannot do without touch drill. This statement is mere assertion. Why should rubbing elbows tend any more to steadiness than an order with intervals? The truth is that this idea is prevalent, not because there is any natural relation between unsteadiness and drill with intervals, but because steadiness has not been exacted in what is called extended order. Steady drill has been dissociated from an order without touch. This is the mistake—a grievous, a fatal mistake.

"Soldiers ought to be quite as steady when in extended order as when in close order, and I am persuaded this is a great point to insist upon." (*Colonel Sir Lumley Graham.*) "There is nothing that requires more careful drill than the attack formation, in which it is of the utmost importance that the men should keep their direction and distances." (*Colonel Davies.*)

The great desideratum is, whatever the formation used may be, that men should be taught it most strictly for training and steadiness at one time, and at another most thoroughly and practically exercised in it in circumstances resembling war, and instructed how to apply it, not merely formally but intelligently, using the formation as a help to orderly action, and an aid to recovery from the unavoidable irregularities of the actual field. But the formation and mode of movement in the parade drill and in the action exercise should be the same. The parade and the field should be working out one thing, the former training in the valuable power of accuracy of detail, the other training in that higher education which can keep the good of detail, so as not to be bound by it as a slave, but rather to be always able to use it as a help. A great deal is said about "steady" drill and "loose" drill. There should be no such distinction. "All drill ought to be steady." (*Colonel Sir Lumley Graham.*) A "loose" order—that is an order in which the men are not placed tightly together—is not a thing which implies "loose" work. There should be no loose work. Thorough steady training in movement with intervals is not loose work. Thorough subsequent exercise in application of that training, by work in which intentional deviation from the mathematical accuracy of form is permitted in order to enable all to gain instruction in the business of fighting—the practical use of formations to help orderly conduct of the combat, and rapid recovery from any unavoidable loss of form or advisable departure from form—such work is in no sense loose work. They are two, rigid drill and action exercise. Each is the complement of the other and absolutely necessary. The first without the other is form without spirit—a dead thing; the latter without the former is spirit without substance, life without power of concentration, conservation and recovery or order and of energy.

"Let the battalion commander guard himself from over-valuing and from undervaluing forms. He undervalues them when he considers himself set free from taking the most thorough knowledge of them. He undervalues them when he does not learn to act most strictly within them. Only thus does he gain for himself the right to hold them as something inferior, and with knowledge and perspicacity to pass beyond them. He overvalues forms when he considers he has completed his work by the most brilliant battalion drill exhibition, when he does not remain conscious within himself that all his school exercises on the flat parade are only an elementary preparation for the leading and duties of a battalion." (*Von Tellenbach.*)

Most pregnant words; but words which are wholly misapplied, when the "forms" are understood to mean for us inconsistent with the practical field work. The former should by every possible means be made to lead up to the latter. The latter can never be used as freely as it should be, obtaining the utmost out of the intelligent handling of troops, unless by the steady training of the former the commander can have thorough confidence of being able to keep them truly in hand, with the power to rally them into orderly form rapidly and certainly. But it is the character of the real work to be done, that should be the one consideration in the choice of forms. Surely no one will maintain that field work and drill work should be inconsistent. Surely without some paramount reason to justify such a course, the mode of the one should not be made to teach something which must be abandoned in the other.

Let then troops be always exercised with an interval, that to move correctly with an interval, which is what they must come

to for all practical movements in the field, may become to them a second nature. Abandon the mechanical "feel for touch," and make retention of accuracy of interval, and its recovery when lost, the basis of all steady training. Train in this vigorously and persistently. For the words "soldiers must be carefully instructed in 'The Touch,' as it is the principal guide in marching," (*Field Exercise*) substitute "soldiers must be carefully instructed in moving with correct intervals, as this is the thing needful in all movements."—*Colburn's Magazine.*

(*To be continued.*)

Annual Gun Practice of Field Batteries for 1886.

LIEUT.-COL. D. T. IRWIN, Inspector of Artillery, has just issued the following memorandum of arrangements made in accordance with G. O. (11), 28.5.86, for the annual gun practice of field batteries in Ontario and Quebec. The firing will not only be recognized by the Department of Militia and Defence, but will count for the prizes offered by the D. A. A.

The gun practice in Ontario will be held at Port Hope and Port Colborne, and will commence at the former on the 28th September. That at Quebec will be held at the Island of Orleans on such dates as may be arranged by the Commandant, R.S.A., Quebec.

Transport will be paid for two officers and sixteen n.c. officers or men from each battery to the range and return; and an allowance of 75 cents for each for such days as necessarily absent from battery headquarters. Transport arrangements for batteries in Ontario will be made by Lieut.-Col. A. H. Macdonald, Guelph, who will furnish officers commanding batteries with the required number of tickets.

Tents and blankets will be provided on the ground; and officers commanding batteries or detachments will make their own arrangements for messing, in correspondence with the executive officer of each locality.

The following batteries will perform their practice, as follows:—

At Port Hope.—Ottawa and Toronto, 29th September.

" —Kingston and Gananoque, 30th September.

" —Durham, 1st October.

At Port Colborne.—Hamilton and Welland Canal, 4th October.

" —Guelph, Nos. 1 and 2 batteries, 5th October.

" —Loodon, 6th October.

Gun practice will commence each day at 9 a.m. Dinner, 1 to 2 p.m. Practice from 2 p.m. The batteries will fire alternately during the forenoon, at the preliminary practice; and the subsequent competitive practice will be continued by alternate competitors in the afternoon.

Officers commanding batteries will make the necessary requisitions for practice ammunition to be delivered at their practice locality without delay. The guns will be furnished by local batteries.

The uniform to be worn by officers and men will be drill order, with cloaks or great coats.

Lieut.-Col. Cotton, Assistant Inspector of Artillery, will act as umpire and camp commandant at each locality in Ontario; Major W. McLean, executive officer at Port Hope; Major King, executive officer at Port Colborne; Capt. J. B. Donaldson, Register Keeper; Lieut. L. H. Irving, T. G. B., range officer; Capt. W. Clarke, 1st Prov. Brigade, camp quarter-master, at Port Colborne; 1 n.c. officer and 6 men, 1 trumpeter; R. S. A. Kingston; 1 n.c. officer and 2 men, 1 trumpeter, local battery.

The local batteries will provide medical officer.

The range officer and quarter-master will report to the executive officer in sufficient time before the practice, to lay out range, receive stores, &c.

The rules for competitive gun practice, as published by the D. A. A. will be strictly adhered to. Any No. 5 firing a gun before the command fire is given by his No. 1, will be disqualified so far as the score which he may make may entitle him to any individual prize. The Umpire's decision to be final.

A Torpedo Corps at Halifax.

INTERESTING torpedo experiments have lately been made at the entrance of Halifax harbor. Last spring Capt. Rawson, R.E., came out from England for the purpose of forming a body of men chosen from the citizens of Halifax who would undergo a thorough schooling in the art of defending the harbor by means of submarine explosives, so that in case of war they would be able to take part with the Imperial troops in guarding the port against the foe. Advertisements were inserted in the daily papers, and over one hundred applications were received. The best of the lot were taken, particular attention being paid to their char-