

THE ARTILLERY REVIVAL.

(The Broad Arrow.)

The report on the practice of batteries of horse and field artillery in 1890, just published, contains details of much general interest to officers of all arms of the service. Field guns have in days gone by been regarded with varying feelings of apprehension, suspicion, and even contempt, by general officers outside the cloth of the artillery. Noise and "moral" effect were the only attributes conceded to this arm. The artillery was taught to "conform" to the movements of infantry—in other words, to keep well out of the way. Intelligent staff officers have been known to ask a battery commander, well hemmed in on flanks and to the rear by troops of the other arms, to "close his battery a little to the left," and to exhibit no little chagrin at the inability of guns to execute the "side step" of the foot soldier. The results of artillery fire in the campaign of 1870-71 changed all this. The undeniable power of well-served guns on the battle field has conduced to the due appreciation of this wonderful auxiliary, and general officers, instead of laying it aside as a vexatious encumbrance, hardly worth the value of its necessary escort, are learning to avail themselves of its far-reaching fire effect which will enable them to bring their infantry and cavalry within striking distance of a well posted enemy. During the last ten years a strong artillery revival has been in progress in England. *Material* and *personnel* have both undergone many changes, most of them for the best, in full recognition of the admonition of La Harpe, "*Polissez-le sans cesse et le répolissez.*" A considerable improvement has been effected, although artillery officers themselves are perhaps least of all satisfied with the progress attained.

The School of Field Gunnery, as we may perhaps fairly term it, at Okehampton, has done much towards the improvement of artillery fire effect. Without any predisposition to accept its dicta as final or to claim the results of the peace practice-ground as equivalents of that which might be expected on service, we hope to derive from a glance at the report, now published, details which may be of service to all officers anxious to acquire some knowledge of the average intensity and general characteristics of artillery fire effect. Without entering too closely into detail, it is necessary to explain the system under which batteries carry on "service practice" at Okehampton. The batteries are drawn up under cover in rear of the intended position. The battery commander advances with his range-takers, the latter halt 100 yards in rear of the position selected. A staff officer then hands over a written order, indicating the nature of target and the practice required. In the early practice this ran, "Come into action and obtain range and three effective shrapnel." In later stages a certain time was allowed for the maximum fire effect which could be produced therein. Under these conditions, it appears that up to the present time, a period of about ten minutes is necessary for the development of an effective shrapnel fire. Infantry, assailed at 2200 yards when kneeling in a shelter trench, suffered to the extent of 17 per cent., at about 2300 yards, 32.6 per cent., and at 2000 yards, 35.2 per cent. At 1750 yards, infantry, in the firing line, sustained a loss of 58 per cent. Supports suffered an average loss at 1900 yards of 65 per cent., one battery producing a best record of 100 per cent. men hit. It must of course be understood that each "dummy" representing a man is frequently pierced by several bullets, and that in calculating the average of men disabled, only one bullet is taken into consideration. We have abstained from quoting the number of hits, although that figure would perhaps give a fairer idea of the intensity of the fire effect. Average results of time shrapnel at 3000 yards show 62 per cent. of the men of a column of four companies killed, one battery producing 91 per cent. hits on a similar column at a like range.

At a range of 1900 yards, artillery suffered a loss of 40 per cent. of men. The effect of field guns on *material* is as a rule, trivial.

The recorded results of field artillery against cavalry are on the whole disappointing; at 2,400 yards 27 per cent. hits. At a similar range 5 per cent., these being averages, one battery producing a best record of 38 per cent. With case shot, taking the results of battery practice of two batteries only, we find 18 out of 21 dummies in line struck at 200 yards, 11 out of 19 at 300 yards, and, in the average of three batteries, 6 out of 20 at 400 yards. From this it may be inferred that from 1,500 yards to 3,000 and upwards field artillery fire may be expected within a quarter of an hour of the time at which it is directed on any given spot to produce a destructive effect on infantry, varying from 15 to fully 50 per cent. (discarding the best records of individual batteries) according to the formations assailed. At 2,200 yards Artillery against Artillery might be expected to disable, 50 per cent. The Cavalro results cannot perhaps be so readily accepted, as the number of dummies available greatly circumscribes the scope for experiment. It should be noted that although no account is taken of the destructive effects of the opposing fire the results were all based upon practice rather under the conditions of the attack than those which obtain when a battery in a well-chosen site, with every advantage of cover and favourable terrain, awaits an attack, all ranges in the field as approach taken, and possibly fuses set for the most likely points. It should also be noted that the targets at Okehampton are at times almost invisible, and that the ground is most unfavourable for the effect of case shot.

THE QUEEN'S OWN RIFLES.

Just as soon as the New Year is well under way and everyone has fallen into writing ninety-one instead of ninety, without observing any strangeness about it, our military men begin to throw off that lassitude which has been accumulating for the past three months, and steps are taken to find out as to the whereabouts of the company which has been left to its own sweet will. Once the clue has been found steps are taken to hold their annual meeting at which the progress for the past year has been noted and steps taken to ensure a like success in the future. Of the Queen's Own, "A Co.," the crack shooting company of the regiment were the last to hold their annual meeting, held on Tuesday night last in the Mess Rooms of the Bugle Band kindly placed at their disposal by Bug-Major Swift. Capt. Boyce Thompson took the chair and when roll was called forty-seven answered to their names. The reports of the various committees were read and adopted, the balance in the Treasurer's hands being on the proper side of the account. The standing of this company is remarkably high, as their average for shooting is high above all others, and the percentage of drills performed is within a point of the highest company in the Battalion. Besides claiming as a member the best shot in the battalion for 1890 in the person of Corpl. T. Westman, winner of the Peilatt challenge trophy, they have the high honour of furnishing no less than nine men towards the two teams representing the Queen's Own in the Military Rifle League.

After touching reference was made to the death of the late Sergt.-Major McKell the meeting adjourned until Tuesday evening, 10th February, when the Annual Smoking Concert will take place in the Buglers' Mess Rooms.

The annual dinner of D Company is fixed for the 11th inst. at Webb's.

The eighth annual dinner of the Sergeants' Mess will be on or about the 27th of February, and prospects of a successful event are exceedingly bright.

A grand Military Fair in aid of the Regimental Band Fund, to be held for three days and nights during the