

FIRING FROM THE SADDLE.

General Sachotin, of the Russian service, expresses the greatest confidence in the efficacy of fire delivered from the saddle. Given two bodies of opposing cavalry 2000 paces apart, he holds that success will be with the one which remains quiescent, firing salves, until the other if it advance, is within 400 paces, when the firing body should draw swords and deliver a charge superior in shock and cohesion to that of the opposing force, thinned by the fire under which it had advanced, and with horses which had gone over more ground. Cavalry regiments in Russia have, by steady practice twice a week, acquired considerable accuracy and regularity in firing from the saddle, and the horses as a rule are sufficiently quiet to admit of their riders using their fire-arms to great advantage. Opponents of the principle of utilising fire in the cavalry, urge that the cultivation of shooting will cause the neglect of the sword. The result of Russian trials tends to prove the reverse, for the good shots are all good swordsmen.

The following are the details of experiments carried out at the camp at Vladicaucas, under Prince Ambochwar's superintendence:—

The object of attack was composed of a squadron and a sotnie (Cossack cavalry unit), two companies of infantry, and a battery. Opposing them at 2000 yards were placed two squadrons and a sotnie—the intermediate distances of 400 and 1600 paces were marked. Successive attacks were now carried out upon the infantry, the artillery, and the cavalry, the latter firing from the saddle. The attacking parties moved 400 paces at the trot, 1200 at the gallop, and the last 400 at the charge. The results were as follows: a closed squadron attacked two companies one in line, the other in four ranks, the two leading ranks kneeling; the duration of fire was $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes; the infantry began with salves when the attacking squadron broke into a gallop. The first company fired 7 salves, the second 8, only so many because the cavalry halted for a moment owing to a misunderstanding. The attack of the sotnie on the artillery carried out in a "swarm" lasted $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. The four guns fired 30 rounds, observing all the prescribed rules of gunnery—they fired "pairwise," i. e. by sections—the second section is stated to have delivered 12 salvoes in this time!

The attack of a squadron upon another one at the halt, firing from the saddle, lasted 3 minutes, and the assailants received during this time 8 salvoes from the halted squadron and 11 from the sotnie. When the moving cavalry had advanced within 400 paces, the standing body ceased firing—really too soon—returned their rifles, and drew swords advancing to the charge. All the spectators concurred in the opinion that the charge of the body which had awaited the attack was superior

in speed and concentration (*Geschlossenheit*) to that of the attacking force. The cavalry fire is said to have been almost equal in order and regularity to that of infantry; the horses stood remarkably quiet.

A German critic notes that in Russia 10 per cent. of hits at 800 paces is considered good and observes drily that the Russian satisfaction at the results from the saddle held by them to be good, is only justified by applying a comparative standard with shooting on foot, which was bad. General Sachotin is confirmed in his opinion of the utility of firing from the saddle basing his confidence in improved results on the dogged persistency of the Russian soldier "which even astonished the Germans." What even can be done on foot, the same will, he says, be possible from the saddle. Experiments with this view are announced, and regulations for firing from the saddle with the application of the system to the various vicissitudes of an action are shortly to be issued. Many officers express very adverse opinions. General Gourko, in criticising the summer manoeuvres, writes:—"I repeat and reiterate that the strength of cavalry rests in the sword alone, and they should never resort to the carbine until there is no possibility for mounted action."

THE SWORD.

Sir F. Pollock, Bart., recently delivered a very interesting and instructive lecture on the Sword at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, by permission of Maj Gen. W. Stirling, C. B., R. A., the Governor, who, with Maj Gen. Albert Williams, R. A., commanding the garrison and a large number of officers, with the whole of the cadet company, was present on the occasion in the school of arms attached to the gymnasium at the R. M. A. The lecturer traced—as the Irishman of story puts it—the growth of the sword from the dagger of the ancients. The sword naturally divides itself into two great classes, the Eastern curved and single-edged, and the Western straight and double-edged. The present cavalry sabre is a modification of the Eastern blade, and the swords used in the Peninsular War were very curved, as also are some German sabres of more recent date. Time admitted only of a cursory glance at the Italian school of fencing. The introduction of powerful firearms, which led to the abolition of armour, gave an impetus to swordsmanship as necessity arose for self-defence at close quarters, instead of the original reliance on the protection afforded by armour. The earliest rapiers were too heavy for rapid exchanges, and were therefore used in conjunction with the dagger. Capt. Hutton and Instructor Blackburn here appeared in a bout, illustrating the use of the rapier and dagger. French duelling and swordplay were next discussed, the French superiority in the

art of fence being duly acknowledged by the lecturer. Messrs Colmore, Dunn, and Norbury here illustrated the use of foils. The supremacy of the French in play of this description is doubtless due to the fact that duelling is still prevalent in France, the duelling-swords being somewhat similar to foils. Capt. Hutton and Mr. Norbury illustrated the use of French duelling swords. Referring to bayonets Sir F. Pollock, in commenting upon the return to a short bayonet for use in the British army, exhibited an Austrian service bayonet, shorter than the British one; also a Russian bayonet, about as long as our sword-bayonet. The military sword need not of necessity be a clumsy weapon, it is susceptible of scientific use. The lecturer here indicated some "positions" with this weapon, which would certainly make an sergeant-major's hair stand on end—they fulfilled the more useful mission of preventing an enemy removing any of it, and would certainly overstrain any and every existing muscle in a short-service soldier's frame. A revival in swordplay was progressing in England; and, as Englishmen have, as a general rule, to do more fighting than any other nationality, it is right that they should acquire some skill with a weapon of common use. Capt. Hutton and Mr. Dunn here illustrated the use of the cavalry sword in exhibiting a very interesting collection of weapons from the Rotunda, Woolwich, and where Sir F. Pollock described the use of certain characteristic weapons, such as the *kukri* of the Ghoorkas, an Arridi blade, and other curious knives and daggers, Instructor Blackburn and Mr. Dunn concluding the display with the French salute.

A colonel commanding a British regiment, anxious to meet the wishes of his men, lately placed in the regimental reading-room a book "for suggestions and requirements." When the book was brought to him a few days afterwards for his perusal the first entry rather startled him. It was short and to the point: "Want'd a new colonel." It is needless to say that the book was withdrawn, and that in future the regimental institutions of the gallant corps in question will be conducted on lines more in keeping with the rules of discipline and good order.

Mr. Walter Winans, the well known champion revolver shot of the N. R. A. Meetings and South London Rifle Club, has presented a statuette of a mounted "Cowboy," sculptured by himself, to the revolver shots of America, to be shot for. Great interest is taken in the competition by the members of the numerous pistol and revolver clubs. Some of the principal revolver making companies of the States have at the instance of *Forest and Stream* signified their intention to offer some of the best specimens of their productions as prizes supplementary to the main offer of Mr. Winans' trophy.