

ed works, in order by carrying it too soon render their general line futile, and advance the attack to the body of the place within, which may very probably not be as well prepared to receive it as it should have been, and will certainly be at a distinct moral disadvantage. Hence, he says, one essential part of the new system should be to prepare from the first to assist the outer chain of forts where threatened by ready efforts at improvised counterworks thrown up against the enemy's attack; and he concludes by stating emphatically that the active defence of Sebastopol by Todleben here offers the best example that can be studied. He might reasonably have added that the passive defence of Paris by General Trochu presents, whatever its political excuse, the greatest possible warning against the neglect of such efforts, seeing that it resulted in allowing half a million of armed men to be hemmed in and made to surrender by about one fourth their number."

The foregoing paragraph claims for the Germans the *modern system* of fortification—by distant lines of detached works—a system subject to the faults which are inseparable from it of weakening the defensive and offensive powers of the object to be defended—indeed, it would seem to be intended or invented for the sole purpose of multiplying the complications of the defence and simplifying the operations of the assailants.

We do not know what may be thought the best system of defensive works amongst the Engineers of the Armies of Continental Europe, but we do know that all those systems which involve the erection of works above the surface are little better than mere *shell traps*, and all but, if not absolutely useless against modern artillery. The system of detached forts did not save Paris during the last war—it prolonged the agony—but the structures were useless against the German Batteries; they did not even protect the capital from the effects of artillery fire, although they lay much nearer to the enemy than to the city, and were silenced with very little effort indeed.

It appears that the system of Rifle pits connected by covert ways, showing no structure above ground as advised by Major MONMIE, mounted with heavy artillery on the carriages he has invented which brings the gun below the surface to be loaded, not even exposing the gunners, is the one that must be ultimately adopted—because it affords no mark to fire at—because it will cost nothing beyond the necessary excavation of bomb proof and ordinary plank platforms—because it will not be necessary to maintain the works after service—because the pits can be so arranged as to afford mutual support and prevent the possibility of isolation, and finally because no enemy will attempt to establish himself within range.

If the people of Great Britain would rely on the resources of native genius there would be no panics about possible or probable danger from the talents of our neighbors.

THE HON. W. B. VAIL, Minister of Militia, accompanied by Lieut. Col. MACPHERSON left, Ottawa on the 5th inst. for the Niagara Camp. He reviewed the troops on Monday and returned to Ottawa on Tuesday, but again left Ottawa for Halifax on Thursday. His visit to the camp gave special satisfaction, and his well timed remarks, could not fail in producing a favorable impression on the minds of all, and show that he took a deep interest in everything pertaining to the prosperity of the Force. We extract from the *Toronto Globe* the following account of the Minister of Militia's visit to the Niagara Camp:—

"There was an after order issued yesterday afternoon that the parade would be formed at 10:30 this morning, by the Brigade, as the Hon. W. B. Vail, Minister of Militia, would visit the camp and that an escort of cavalry would be detailed to meet him at the dock, where the steamboat lands; and also that a levee would be held afterwards when the officers in camp would be presented. An escort of fifteen men from Welland troop, under Lieutenant Wilson, was on the ground at the time appointed and on the arrival of the steamer *City of Toronto*, Col. Durie and Lieut. Col. Villiers, were ready to receive the party, consisting of the Hon. Mr. Vail, and Lieut. Col. MacPherson, Deputy Adjutant General, when they landed. They entered a carriage and drove out first to see the men at the shooting ranges, after which they proceeded to the Queen's Royal Hotel, and after a short stay drove at once to the camp. Here the troops had been formed in line of columns—the cavalry on the right; next the artillery; then the Queen's Own Rifles, and following this corps on the other battalions according to their number on the volunteer strength of the Province. The infantry deployed into line, and immediately the Hon. Mr. Vail drove on the ground. The saluting point was about 300 yards from the grass grown ramparts of Old Fort George; the troops being to the west. The visiting party first drove slowly along the front of the line, the band of each battalion playing as they passed; then along the rear; and, this concluded, the review began. The cavalry went past in squadrons, the artillery in column, and the infantry at a quick step, the Queen's Own leading in open column of companies. The march past was a surprise to most even of the officers it was in general so well done; and if there were some battalions that excelled, I will allow virtue to be its own reward for once, and make no comparisons, although it is difficult not to speak of the best. The infantry corps halted about a quarter of a mile from the saluting point, the cavalry and artillery went round and passed again at the trot, the former breaking a good deal in this movement. The infantry changed front by a counter-march of companies, and marched back past the saluting point, left in front, and took up position on the original ground. After an interval which seemed difficult to explain in the minds of a small group of spectators, of whom not the most baffled were several ladies, expectation was gratified by an advance of the whole force in line, which formed a really splendid spectacle. The line was halted; retired by fours from the right of companies; the cavalry and artillery going about at the gallop. The troops were formed in hollow square, the officers and colors coming to the front, and the carriage con-

taining the visitors was driven into the square. The Hon. Mr. Vail arose and spoke, addressing Col. Durie, the officers and men of the force: "It had afforded him a great deal of pleasure to make this visit, and to witness the movements and become acquainted with the officers of the force. It only required a soldier's eye to enjoy the manoeuvres of the troops, and to see that there were in the ranks that had passed in review before him the making of brave and expert soldiers. He was glad to see so much military spirit in the western volunteers. He had recently been on the lower St. Lawrence, and had seen there the great fortifications that were left without a garrison, and remained as a legacy to the people of this country and he believed they would have a soldier's pride in filling the place of the troops that had once been there. There were no soldiers there now, but it was a pleasure to see the old flag flying there still. Gen. Smyth, the Inspecting Field Officer, would probably pay them a visit of inspection in a few days, and it was possible he would point out some improvements; but he (Hon. Mr. Vail) thought that officer would find here a body of men equal to the famed militia of the Old Country. He spoke of the pleasure he had experienced from the beautiful scenery of the country in which he stood; and as he remembered the old associations, and that he was speaking to the descendants of the brave men who had made the ground beneath their feet famous, he promised that he would oppose any scheme to transfer the right of the military reserve at Niagara. He could conscientiously compliment Colonel Durie and the officers and men, and he would be proud to represent them on the floor of Parliament; and he believed the Government of which he was a member would not neglect the volunteers. He concluded by saying he would not soon forget the pleasure of this day, which had been one of the most agreeable in his life. Then there were given three mighty cheers for the Queen; the command was given, 'officers and colors take post'—the order for each corps to march to their private places—and the day was over. The Hon. Mr. Vail then drove through the camp, and proceeded afterwards to the brigade headquarters, where he met the staff and officers commanding battalions and corps at dinner. In the afternoon there was a levee, when the officers in the camp were presented."

METEOROLOGISTS have long held that the climate of Southern Europe, especially of the Alpine ranges, has been in a very considerable degree, and within a comparatively recent period, modified by the desiccation of the sea which once covered the Desert of Sahara. What the effect of again filling that arid expanse or any portion of it with water will be, can only be ascertained by what is presumably proven to have happened, and that is said to have been an indefinite enlargement of the Alpine glaciers with a very perceptible change in the climates of France and Italy, if such changes do not extend further.

It is well known that the sirocco of Sicily, Naples, Malta, &c., is a wind which had all moisture extracted from it by passing over the Great African Desert, and its agency in the higher temperatures of those countries is well known.

The aspect of the design is shown as at pre-