

very great—is as *obvious*. In the same way, the mode of employing cavalry is an arm apart, instead of attaching a certain proportion of it to each division, where they would be of the utmost service to the officer in command. "Do not," they say, however, think for one moment that at our great manoeuvres we do not commit blunders every year. We have been at our work a long time. It will take you five years yet to get the system into working order. We learn something every year still, and see errors to correct each time." As to horses, officers and men of the Artillery, they have but one opinion, but it would be too much to say they are quite satisfied with the reasons which have led in this country to the condemnation of the breech-loading system, especially as they think they have found a good time-fuze and can get a shrapnel fuse after all. To officers who are accustomed to companies 250 strong, and squadrons, two of which equal the cavalry regiments they saw on Monday, the number of regimental officers appears unjustifiable; but whatever may be the details in which they consider improvement possible, they, like nearly all our foreign visitors, are completely incredulous as to the dangers or possibility of invasion. "I thought it possible," said one of the officers who were at Fisherton Hall, "till I came here, now I see what a baseless fear it must be." One alone dissented and considered that a coalition between Germany and the United States, or more formidable still, between Russia and the Transatlantic Republic, might render the undertaking not indeed successful, but of possible execution.

#### OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

The *Times* observes that it is evident that the main value of the autumn manoeuvres, considered as anything more than a physical exercise, depends on the manner in which the umpires discharge their duties. It is for them to register the lessons of daily experience, and to impress it with due firmness on the officers engaged. It must always be a very difficult task to deduce these substantial lessons, from fictitious warfare; but there are some points on which, if due care be taken, instruction can be insured. Officers, for instance, may undoubtedly acquire the art of duly observing the character of the ground over which they are operating, and of making due use of its peculiarities. There was nothing, in which during the late war, the Prussians were more conspicuously superior to the French, and they had, for the most part, acquired their skill in the exercises of peace. General Blumenthal, indeed, is reported to have said that when the firing begins the instructions of manoeuvres is over. All that is important in them is the disposition of troops and the method of advance. Perhaps there is no army in which such instruction is more necessary than in our own: Leave a British soldier to himself, and his sole idea would be to close upon his foe. We are not good at preparation in anything. But the chief peculiarities of modern warfare lie in the importance now attached to distant, preparatory, and almost intangible pre-arrangements. A good beginning is more than ever half the battle. If our officers do not perfect themselves in this art of opening the game of war, they will find themselves, in the event of conflict, hopelessly outmanoeuvred by their adversaries.

The *Post* asserts that the last fight of the manoeuvres has served to establish an inference already getting well arrived at from the preceding operations—namely that the sys-

tem of "general ideas" adopted on this occasion either goes too far or not far enough. Either the contending generals must be left to operate against each other almost untrammelled, or the conditions of the game they have to play must be laid down much more fully, emphatically, and precisely. A kind of middle course was adopted, but it has not answered. Which of the other two courses ought to be worked on in future? The plan of leaving the generals to fight it out after their own idea has many advocates, and it is very taking at the first sight. Under it all bickering as to what was or was not allowable would be impossible, and the Control Department would be really tried by a crucial test. But those advantages, it seems to the *Post* would be too dearly purchased; for they would be gained at the expense of permitting and teaching a strategy so false and unreal as to stamp the manoeuvres with the mark of downright absurdity.

The *Standard* is of opinion that the autumn manoeuvres of 1872 have been as little instructive and as unreal as could well be. If those of 1873 are to resemble their predecessors, the sooner these military displays are done away with the better.

The *Daily Telegraph* trusts that before the next autumn the worst officer in Her Majesty's Service, General Idea, will be sent into honourable retirement and that the concrete fact, visible, tangible, moveable, will succeed to his place on the muster roll. Apart from the absurdities performed by this pretentious entity, the campaign has been well worth the money it has cost. We have every reason to be proud of the quality of our troops, whatever else may be wrong in spirit and system. The Militia have disproved the accusations put forth last year, while the Volunteers have afforded evidence that discipline and practice alone are needed to make them choice soldiers. We may dismiss the autumn manoeuvres of 1872 with the verdict that on the whole they have been profitable to the nation. But they are still only a beginning, and require the touch of a master hand to bring them up to the high standard which army administrators should ever keep in view.

The *Daily News* says:—None of us will sleep less soundly because it is found we have not an army of philosophers to defend us, and that over elaborate schemes fail of being understood; but the comprehension of positive orders by officers is a matter of life and death in war, and it is discouraging to find that is not under all circumstances to be expected. Failures like these almost discourage the further important inquiry whether our army is making progress in the art of fighting. We know that in some quarters the inquiry itself is regarded as a thing to be discouraged. The artillery has earned again this year the very high encomiums it merited a year ago in Hampshire, while the cavalry is such as it would be difficult to match, horse or man, out of England. These manoeuvres have once more shown to us our deficiencies, which are still many and great; but they have also shown that our army has great undeveloped capabilities. With the abolition of purchase it has entered upon a new career; our officers will take a professional pride in the attainments of their men and the efficiency of their regiments, and if only they are fairly encouraged they will make our army worthy to be compared with that of any military force in the world.

The *Spectator* observes that the second series of autumn manoeuvres are now at an

end, and although marred by some striking blemishes, they have been a great improvement on the operations of the past year; they have stimulated the zeal of the army; afforded officers and men instruction with an object, so much more effective than instruction without an object; varied the routine duty of camp and garrison by the novelties of a novel life; and to some degree tested organization, tactics, and generalship. We have not sufficient information to warrant any observations on the tactical experiments—if there were any—nor can we yet form any definite opinion on the action of the Control Department. Much more evidence than that yet afforded for purposes of criticism. On the bearing of the troops there seems to be but one opinion, and it is creditable to regimental discipline. The auxiliary forces came out better than was anticipated; but so far as the Volunteers are concerned that is not surprising, for they were virtually picked men. The Militia appeared to have raised the reputation of that branch; but we all know that the country regiments only want training, clothing and good food to make them effective soldiers. Hereafter we shall get the complaints of competent observers. The most salient lesson taught by the manoeuvres is—give up the faculty of general ideas, all paper forces and considerations. Define the field and the objects of the campaign, and let the generals manoeuvre as best they can. Another lesson is—choose your commanders from the rising generation of soldiers; for the future belongs to the young or comparatively young, so that the novel, as far as it is sanctioned by experience, may have some chance of being recognized. Another year ought to see material amendments in the system and execution of our peace manoeuvres.

#### BANQUET AT THE WAR OFFICE.

On Friday evening last week, as briefly announced in our last impression, the right Hon. Edward Cardwell, as Secretary of State for War, gave a grand banquet at the War Office, Pall Mall, to the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge, and the foreign officers from Belgium, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Russia, Spain, and Turkey, as well as English officers taking part or assisting in the autumn manoeuvres. The entrance hall of the War Office was carpeted with scarlet baize, and the room leading to the dining room was decorated with trophies of arms and the national flags. The full band of the Grenadier Guards, conducted by Mr. Dan Godfrey, played during the arrival of the guests at the foot of the principal staircase.

The Duke of Teck was amongst the early arrivals. The Prince of Wales, attended by General Sir W. Knollys and Colonel Feesdale, C. B., arrived at eight o'clock, and was shortly afterwards followed by the Duke of Cambridge, attended by Colonel Tyrwhitt. On the arrival of the Prince of Wales and of the Duke of Cambridge, the military band in attendance struck up the National Anthem.

The banquet was served up in the lofty and commodious banqueting room of the War Office (originally built for the Duke of Cumberland, brother of George III.) The table, a horseshoe shaped one, was laid for eighty guests, the Secretary of State for war presiding, supported on the left and right by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, the officers representing the different foreign Governments being seated at the upper table. The festive board was decorated by a profuse display of silver candle