

## SPADE AND PICK.

To call a spade a spade, is not at all times convenient; at the present, perhaps, it may be anything but pleasant to those whose bounden duty it was to see that an instrument of such vital importance to an "Army of the period," inconvenient though its name might be, was provided for our troops. Are we not open, in some degree, to these reproaches not unfrequently heaped upon us, for our seeming want of enterprise, our fearful distrust of rushing into any novelty? How often do we originate ideas for ourselves? do we not generally wait for other nations to arm themselves in the newest and most advantageous way? and then, when we are quite sure they have shot some considerable way ahead of us, do we not feel ourselves forced into an imitation?

In a small work recently published, giving some of the changes about to be introduced into the infantry drill, we find that "Shelter Trench Exercise" is introduced as part of the new field exercise. But "Shelter Trenches" require the use of spades, or, to evade that unpleasant word, let us call them shovels, for their execution. As yet we have seen or heard little to lead us to suppose that such tools are to become part of the equipment of our troops. We are now, therefore, in this curious position—the new field exercise, into which spade drill has been introduced, is already in force in some of our garrisons, and yet not a spade is forthcoming. Can any one inform us if a contract has been entered into for the supply of these articles for the use of the troops? If so, in what quantities are they ordered? are they to be issued by the dozen to regiments or by the score? or is each man to be taught to acquire the same familiarity in carrying his spade as he already has in walking away with his rifle or his kit? These are questions, notwithstanding their gravity, which, in a private firm, would be settled in some form or another almost as quickly as this can be read, experience being allowed to point out any improvement when necessary.

The men of the Danish army have for some years been in the habit of carrying a spade with a short handle; many of the Prussian regiments now carry the same kind of tool. In France we hear that the "embanking tools," are, in a great measure, carried for the men in waggons appointed for the purpose. If we have a committee at work sifting this subject, where do they hold their sittings? when were they appointed and when may we expect them to publish their report? These are questions which should be speedily answered, for in these days delays are dangerous. The nations who are properly armed and equipped do not wait for their adversaries to complete any arrangement of detail neglected in time of peace. A few days now suffice to finish the campaign; everything, therefore, must be ready at hand, no time will be allowed to repair omissions. Perhaps some part of the disaster which has recently fallen upon the French, may be attributed to the fact of an insufficient supply of tools for entrenching themselves. Experiments seem to warrant us in assuming, that at least one-third of the troops should be provided with spades and picks; though it would not become us lightly to put aside the dictum of Napoleon, that every man should carry an entrenching tool, still, perhaps, we are warranted in not giv-

ing too rigid an interpretation to this rule when we consider that if more than one-third of the troops were employed at the same time they would be so close together as to hinder rather than assist one another, except in the formation of heavy works, when relays of earth require to be thrown up; but then such a case as this does not enter into the subject under discussion. The Americans, whom we must allow to be good judges in such matters, considering the experience they acquired in the War of Secession, seem to have adopted a most handy little tool. It has a long handle; and though the tools with short handles employed by some of the foreigners may have their good points, these may be considered as more than counterbalanced by the rapidity of execution and the general adaptability of the spade with a long handle. They are carried by two companies of each regiment by turns. This appears to us a good method for carrying the tools; but if the arms and accoutrements of two regiments were altered in such a manner as to decrease their weight, we might then impose upon those companies the entire carriage, thus avoiding the confusion occasioned by the constant change of bearers. In conclusion, we will briefly call attention to the success which attended the competition occasioned by the offer of a reward by the Government for the best rifle fulfilling certain prescribed conditions. The amount of money expended was as nothing to the nation. Who doubts that it was well laid out? We say the country will never begrudge such sums, and we suggest that a prize should again be offered for competition for the best "entrenching tools," i.e., spade and pick, laying down the requisite conditions for a military weapon, such as lightness and strength combined with general adaptability for all soils, &c.—*Broad Arrow*.

## PERSIA AND AFGHANISTAN.

The present mail has brought us intelligence that Afghanistan and Persia are now at peace. The Shah has issued instructions for due restitution being made to the Ameer for whatever property has been plundered by the border tribes. This termination of a serious dispute is attributed mainly to the policy adopted by the Indian Government since the Curbar at Umballa. In reference to this subject, we quote the following from Allen's *Indian Mail*:—"Rumours have been flying about for some time past of a special mission from this country, sent out to arbitrate between Persia and Afghanistan, touching the claims of their respective rulers to sovereign rights in the border province of Seistan. On these reports however we did not care to remark while the move itself to which they pointed was still under consideration. Now that the move has, we believe, been finally undertaken, there is no need for further reticence. Colonel Goldsmid is, we learn, to start this week on a mission of this very kind, accompanied by Capt. C. Bean Smith, of the Madras army. No better selection than that of Col. Goldsmid could have been made for such a purpose. Thoroughly acquainted with both countries, with the language and manners of their respective peoples, he is also a man of very high energy, sound discretion, and courteous bearing, a quality specially needed in a diplomatist."

It is generally expected that Lieutenant-General the Hon. James Lindsay will return home from Canada and resume his duties at the War Office at the close of the year.

## INDIAN ITEMS.

Major E. K. O. Gilbert has died of dysentery at Simla.

The services of Major Henry Moor, Staff Corps, have been placed at the disposal of the Government of India.

The Governor of Turkistan, Naib Mahomed Alum Khan, has arrived at Cabul. He was received with great kindness by the Ameer.

There is said to be no ground for the rumour that General Fytche is to resign of office as Chief Commissioner of British Burmah next year.

Accounts from the central Provinces bespeak an abundant harvest. The monsoon has been exceedingly favourable in the districts and bids fair to continue so.

Lord Napier of Magdala will, it is said, spend but a short time in Calcutta this cold weather, as he means to visit all the stations in Assam and the northeastern frontier.

Prince Gholam Mohammed has made a donation of £10,000 to the Calcutta Charitable fund for the relief of the poor of all creeds, which His Highness established last cold season.

We regret to learn also the death of Mr. A. B. Ross, Assistant Commissioner of Boorhanpoor, Central Provinces. Mr. Ross died at Nassick of fever, after four days' illness. His services as an officer of the Central Provinces Commission are very highly spoken of.

Lieutenant C. L. C. De Roebeck, of the 60th Rifles, late A.D.C. to the Governor of Madras, arrived at Simla on the 12th ultimo. To officiate as A.D.C. to the Viceroy, during the absence of the Hon. H. C. L. Wood. Mr. Wood has succeeded Capt. Grey as deputy Commissioner.

The name of Mr. John Strachey is confidentially sent down from Simla to a contemporary as the next Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal; whereon that contemporary exclaims that Bengal gains little by the change. The zemindars are not Bengal, however, though they believe they are; and John Strachey will see that the zemindars do their duty by Bengal, in accordance with the basis of the settlement.

The Ameer Shere Ali has arranged with the Khyber chiefs about having the Khyber Pass kept open for travellers and merchants. The chiefs are to receive twenty thousand rupees a year, and certain light duties on goods passing through. We further learn that the quarrelsome Governor of Turkistan has arrived in Cabul and has been received with great kindness; and that the Ameer is busy casting Armstrong guns after the model we gave him.—*Homeward Mail*.

The Mohammed Kheyl Wazeeries were still troublesome by the last accounts. On July 4th, some hundred and fifty of them were seen and chased by a body of our troopers near the Koorum. A small party of Punaub infantry coming up to dislodge them from their place of shelter, but they only fell back to another post, whence nothing but the approach of more infantry and cavalry under Col. Gardiner compelled their final retreat into the hills. Several of our men were disabled by sunstroke, and all seem to have suffered much from the heat. In another month or two there will, we suppose, be another settling of accounts with these tiresome gentry.