

Strasburg alone, they made no resistance, and even in its case the siege could only save the national honor, it had no effect on the national defence. We have recently given a synopsis of a paper read by Lieut. ENGLISH, R.E., on the Moncrieff System of Mounting Guns, but which should have been more properly called a defence of the *ancient* or late system of fortification, and in the discussion which arose thereon we have the testimony of some of the first naval officers of the day, to prove that mode of defence obsolete, inefficient, and sure to entail far greater loss on the defenders than on the assailants.

Under these circumstances the question has naturally arisen as to what shall be the shape of those works of *national defence* behind which an army inferior in numbers can hold a superior force at bay till a concentration of troops in its own rear would enable it to assume the offensive, and the movements now contemplated by the French authorities point to a solution of that problem in the science of modern war. Entrenched camps communicating with one another, undoubtedly offer the most serious obstacle to the advance of an invader; if the defences of those camps are judiciously chosen, the assailant labours under serious disadvantage in taking up position for attack; if one is forced, his difficulties only commence as he has to mark or carry those on his flanks; while the defenders falling back will be steadily increasing in force in front. It would appear then that here is to be found the true solution of a problem in military science which has passed the best strategists and military engineers the world has yet seen, added enormously to the cost of national defence, while in reality affording no national aid. The new system can be worked out by the troops, consisting as it must do of earthworks of the simplest possible construction armed with guns of large calibre and great range; in fact the skill of the engineer will be directed more to exhibit no profile, and to connect his *gun pits*, for that is the form his batteries must take by railway lines under cover and always to the rear. A series of field works of the description required could be constructed at very slight expense, and would be permanent because they should present no particular distinctive features from the surrounding country, being merely a series of *sunken* fences with a glacis, but no parapet, and sodded over they would require no repair, the thicker and greener the sward the better; the only structures necessary would be expose magazines, and those would be of the most simple construction.

A regular fortification on the old system involved the expense of a permanent garrison—repairs constantly receiving the care of a costly armament and modifications to suit the progress of mechanical science. Under the new system none of those conditions are requisite—whenever the exigencies oc-

curs troops are marched into to occupy the works; there are no repairs needed, the armament is drawn from the nearest military store on its own wheels by the four horses of the neighbourhood or by rail moved into position, a simple platform of sleepers and planks is laid down in the gunpit, the express magazine covered in, and the fortress is at once manned and armed. To the eye of the invader nothing is to be seen except perhaps the white tents of the troops in sheltered or picturesque positions and open hill sides dotted here and there with a farm house—he advances to reconnoitre within range, a flash, a puff of smoke the whistle of a round shot from what part of the train before him he cannot tell, proves that deadly danger lies in his path, and before he can get at his enemy he must encounter the terrible fire of those "*snakes in the grass*" whose whereabouts position or numbers he knows nothing about. Marked behind plantations on bleak hill sides on the flanks of deep ravines and sweeping the level meadows the guns of the entrenched camps capable of incalculable mischief, will only awake the echoes when the invader develops his plan of attack, and thus they present no mark to fire at. A gun muzzle two feet in diameter popping up out of a hole is not a visible object at two thousand yards to fire at, the supposed site of its flash, or at the puff of smoke, would be about as futile as to fire at the flash of lightning to find the point of the cloud from which it sprang. Whatever advantage the assailant possessed "*Moncrieff System of Mounting Ordnance*" has not only deprived him of, but it has revolutionized the whole science of fortification.

The following article from the *United States Army and Navy Journal* of 13th December will be interesting to our readers, especially as it contains a challenge of National importance—and from Ireland too.

Our riflemen will have to look well to their laurels or *Creedmoor* will be quietly absorbing some of the honors exclusively belonging to them—the spirit of emulation is evoked and it will doubtless tend to much good.

THE AMATEUR RIFLE CLUB.—This club, affiliating with the National Rifle Association, was organized during the past year, and now numbers over fifty members. One of the prominent objects of the club has been to introduce the practice of long range firing with rifles of the most approved pattern, the club being substantially modelled on the pattern of the small bore clubs of England and Canada, which have been so successful in developing fine shooting. The average shooting of the club in seven shots, in the first match held by it, was 14 points per man. In latter matches it exceeded 19. An average $3\frac{1}{4}$ out of a possible 4 has been made by several at 500 yards, in the recorded matches of the year, and the average of the entire shooting of all the members was 2.5, which can compare very favorably with any shooting known.

The first annual business meeting of the club was held at Company G room Svent's armory, on Friday evening, December 5 the president, Captain (George) W. Wingate, presiding. There was a good attendance. After the secretary's report was read and some routine business transacted, an election of officers for the ensuing year took place, with the following result: President, George W. Wingate, re-elected; Vice President, Colonel H. A. Gildersleeve, Twelfth regiment, New York; Secretary and Treasurer, Fred. P. Fairbanks re-elected; Executive Committee, Henry Fulton, J.S.B. Collins, A. Alford, L.C. Bruce (George S. Sehermerhorn, Jr.).

On motion of Mr J. P. M. Richards the following resolution was proposed and adopted in regard to the challenge from Irish riflemen:

Resolved, That the executive committee of this club be hereby requested to correspond with Mr. Leech, and, if satisfactory terms can be arranged, to accept the challenge in the name of the Amateur Rifle Club of the city of New York, and of the riflemen of America. And it is hereby suggested to the executive committee that, in the event of the proposed match being arranged, an opportunity be offered to the riflemen of the United States, at the earliest possible date, to compete with our own practice squad for places in the team, but without expense to the club.

The following is the challenge of the "*Irish eight*" referred to:

Challenge to the Riflemen of America from the Riflemen of Ireland, represented by the members of the Irish Rifle Association.

Mr. A. Blennerhassett Leech, founder in 1867 of the Irish Rifle Association, will select from the members a team which he will match against an equal number of the representative American rifle shots, to shoot in the United States, in the autumn of 1874 on the following conditions:—

Targets, scoring, etc.—Same as adopted by the National Rifle Association of Great Britain at Wimbledon, 1873 (when the Irish eight won the international match for the Elcho shield, beating England and Scotland).

Ranges—800, 900, 1,000, and 1,100 yards. Rifles—Any not exceeding ten pounds weight, but without telescope sights or hair-triggers.

Position—Any, but no artificial rest permitted either for the rifle or person of the shooter.

The American team to be composed exclusively of riflemen born in the United States, and to shoot with rifles of American manufacture.

The Irish team will shoot with rifles by Rigby, of Dublin.

As this challenge is given to decide the title to the rifle championship of the world, Mr. Leech will require a sufficient stake to be put down, not for the sake of a trifling pecuniary gain, but as a guarantee that the Irish team will meet the representatives of America.

Mr. Leech desires to draw the attention of the American people to the fact that the laws of Great Britain forbid the formation in Ireland of rifle corps similar to those which exist in great numbers in England and Scotland, and that any skill acquired by Irishmen in rifle shooting is the result of individual exertion under difficulties arising from discouraging legislation.

ARTHUR B. LEECH.

DUBLIN, October 31, 1873.