

SCHOOL DRILL.

The following extract from a pamphlet by Edwin Chadwick, C. B., on "The Expediency of the General Introduction of Military Drill and Naval Exercise in the School Stages," will be read with interest; and if the suggestions therein contained, modified to suit this country, should be generally adopted, they could not fail to be productive of the very best results.

The principle of the chief measure which I have to propose is an old one, involved in the old practice of the kingdom, when every local community, every parish as well as burgh, was required to exercise the whole male population, beginning with the very young, in military exercises, and the then use of the bow. I propose to change the commencement of military exercises from the adult to the juvenile, or to the earliest of the school stages, and to provide that in all the elementary schools throughout the kingdom aided by the State, the boys shall be trained in the military exercises and appropriate gymnastics. I may support this proposition by the evidence of the results obtained by long and practical experience in elementary schools in different parts of the country, and the testimony of intelligent non-commissioned officers who have been engaged in training recruits. These officers all agree that the earlier they begin this training the better they succeed; that they do in infancy what is difficult to do at a more advanced age, and what they cannot do at all with many men in the adult stages. In the infantile or school stage, we have, as material, to bend the tender twig; in the juvenile stage, we have to straighten the crooked stick; and, in the adult age, we have to reform the gnarled oak. The open-air exercises of the drill-master, when properly managed, are greatly preferred by boys to the desk-work of the schoolmaster.

In the district schools or orphan asylums, where it has been applied—and I more particularly allude to one institution where the military and naval drill have been long combined with great advantage—and where they were left to themselves to choose their occupations, full sixty per cent. volunteer for the royal service; about one half of the sixty per cent. for the army, and one half for the navy. It is common for the trained lad, when he joins the army, to be asked by the non-commissioned officers, who observe his ready movement, "from what regiment he has come?" and when he says from no regiment at all, to be told bluntly that he is lying, and that he must have deserted, it not being in the corporal's conception that such good drill can have been acquired except in a regiment.

As, to the expense of such species of drill, the services of one drill-master, that of a pensioner, usually are found to suffice for 500 boys. It takes about three months to finish a lad off well in the rudimentary military drill, at a rate of a penny a week, or a shilling per head for three months' training required for the military drill. It would, however, be worth while to improve these exercises by introducing special gymnastics; but as the military drill is at present conducted, it may be stated that about fifty lads may be got well through the military drill in the juvenile stage, at the expense of keeping and drilling one recruit from the ploughtail in the adult age. If, therefore, by the general adoption of the system, the result was only to get two volunteers out of each hundred so drilled in the infantile stage, or if the time of training several militiamen be saved hereafter in the adult stage, the public would be repaid hereafter. By the measure I propose, the discouragement to volunteering constituted by the drill, which is acknowledged to be very serious by its irksomeness, and the ridicule attached to awkwardness, is removed. By removing the drill to the infantile stage, a powerful encouragement is given. The lad, when he has arrived at the time to make his choice of

an occupation, has the temptation of a service for which he is already in a great measure prepared. On the civil side he has the discouragement of having to undergo a training for some handicraft, or a period of apprenticeship, and, on the other, the encouragement of a service for which he believes himself to be quite ready. The practical result is, as might be expected, that the majority in well-trained schools do volunteer for the military or naval service. Considering these conditions, we may be quite sure of the result of the expenditure in the infantile stage, in a highly remunerative and extensive amount of volunteering.

Assuming that the exercises given in the school stage are made general and thorough amongst the whole of the population in the school stage, the measure will reduce the time and expense of the drill for the militia, supposing, as has been proposed, that compulsory ballot for the militia should be restored and extended. With the increased disposition to recruitment, it will moreover associate education and an advanced quality of recruitment. Whatever may be the military arrangements suggested—the extension of the militia ballot, a positive conscription for the adult stages—it will be an advantage to have the drill and exercises carried out as thoroughly as possible, as a foundation for them, in the school stages. Further, by this early training, besides the predisposition for volunteering for the regular army, we get a population which may be readily put in line for any defensive purposes. If the body of the people were well trained in the school stage, the British people would step out of civil life, and fall into rank, and act together whenever it may be necessary in any part of the globe. What such aptitudes would have been to the civil population of India will suggest itself for consideration.

But there are considerable advantages in combining naval exercises with the military drill in the same school, by the use of a mast and sails in the exercising or play-grounds, on which a very large proportion of the naval exercises may be given.

In the first place, the naval training varies the exercises, and increases the interest in them among the boys; it varies the gymnastics, and adds to the useful physical and mental qualifications imparted. If it be made the foundation of a sea service, the previous training in the military drill is of advantage to the sailor, as well as the knowledge of the exercises of seamen is of use to the soldiers, to enable them to lend a hand for naval service.

Seven years ago, I endeavored to call attention to some evidence as to the results of military exercises in the half-time or district schools, which received much consideration from some members of the Government, and from many noblemen and gentlemen interested in the Volunteer movement, as well as in the military policy of the country. Lord Elcho took the lead in the formation of an association for the promotion of the practice of military drill in the public schools. The object of the association was soon accomplished as respects the chief of these schools, and as part of the Volunteer movement; at that time influential opinion did not carry exertion further. Sir John Burgoyne, General Shaw Kennedy, Sir DeLacy Evans, and other distinguished members of the military profession, however, then sanctioned the conclusions from the evidence which I submitted as to the importance of the general application of the principles to the training of the youth of the country. Since then, the evidence which I collected and published has attracted attention in the United States, and has been cited in support of a movement there to get naval and military exercises taught in all the elementary schools. Three Governors of New England States have, in their messages, directed the attention of the State Legislatures to the subject, and I believe that the principle is in process of practical adoption there. I have no doubt that it will

be found extensively necessary amongst populations of advanced industrial conditions.

But in connection with the subject, it is proper to direct attention to the experience of the special value of military and naval exercises for the physical training of the population for civil industrial occupations; even if we were to suppose that the British people were to enjoy perpetual peace in the colonies, and in their contact with barbarous nations, as well as at home.

It is proved that these exercises give a much-needed physical, as well as moral training—a training which adds to their productive power and value for all sorts of civil service. I have obtained the conclusive evidence of large employers of labour, that four drilled labourers are equal in efficiency for ordinary labour to five that are undrilled. But considerable improvement has of late been made in physical training, which adds to the efficiency derived from military drill.

FROM THE UNITED STATES.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

NEW YORK, Feb. 2, 1867.

DEAR REVIEW.—The Fenians are evidently at their wits end, as to how to raise an excitement and more money. Their last dodge was that six Fenian Chiefs had sailed for France, headed by the ubiquitous Stephens. However, this little dodge failed, as the victims of their recent swindle have now their eyes open, and I doubt whether the appearance of the illustrious James mounted, with his 600,000 men at his back, driving the "dirty Saxons" from the face of the earth, or any other such effective tableau would draw any more money from their pockets. As I suppose the little we will ever hear of these ruffians in future, will be in the Police calendars. I may, perhaps, give the doings, as far as is known, to the respectable world, of these would-be heroes. General Sweeney, who was, I think, the most respectable of the crowd, which is by no means a compliment to him, is with his regiment of the U. S. regulars at Augusta, Georgia, in which he holds the position of Major and Brevet-Colonel. His Excellency President Roberts, according to last accounts is still engaged on the subject of the conquest of Canada, and is likely to remain at his pleasant but difficult task, for some years to come. Stephens is, well, it's hard to say what he is, for it seems to be a vexed question among the sheep of his fold, as they have been for some weeks past endeavoring to solve it. The result, to use a slang expression, "bumming" around the low groggeries of this and other cities.

I must apologise to your readers for mentioning such ruffians, but it is to show how easily the minds of the people here are changed. A year ago, every paper in the city, with one exception, the New York 'Times,' lauded them to the skies, spoke of the manner in which England would be made to tremble, &c., &c., &c., whereas, now these same papers cannot find words too harsh for them—"Such is life."

Toughing army matters.—Provost Marshal General Fry, in his report, furnishes some very valuable statistics as to comparative mortality of officers and men in the Union army during the late war.

It appears that 280,739 officers and men lost their lives in the army from military service of the number, 5,221 commissioned officers, and 90,886 men have been killed in action; died of wounds, while 2,321 commissioned officers and 182,329 men died of disease. This shows a proportion of officers to men killed in battle to