

FIELD DAY AT BRIGHTON.

The London *Times* gives an interesting account of the field day of volunteers at Brighton. The problem to be worked out was based on the supposition that a foreign army had landed between Brighton and Shoreham, and had taken up a strong position on the Downs, in front of the Brighton race stand, looking eastwards. This army, which has been called the Brighton force, was led by Sir Alfred Horsford, and was faced at a distance of two miles by the Lewes or home force, also holding a strong position under General Lysons. The two armies were placed in these positions by directions from the Empire Staff, and were then left to fight it out under certain conditions—namely, that they must keep within a prescribed area, avoid "tabooed" ground, and maintain their communications with Brighton and Lewes respectively. According to the War Office plan, General Horsford's first line was drawn up along the Downs, from Bevendean to a point about 1,000 yards in rear of Ovenden. His position in front of the race course was a very strong one, and he had 12,082 men and 22 pieces of artillery. Against these General Lysons had 11,082 men and 20 guns. A large patch of "tabooed" ground, over which troops were not allowed to manoeuvre, and which, for practical purposes may be supposed to be a lake or swamp, lay in the centre of General Horsford's position, and had a serious bearing on the fortunes of the day. So long as General Horsford kept it in his front it was a source of strength, but when he advanced beyond it, he partly did, it became a source of weakness, separating his forces and rendering his centre liable to be broken through by an enemy who should make a strong assault along its edge. This was just what turned out to be the case, Horsford's forces being divided into two parts and beaten in detail. Each general began the day with the disadvantage of having practically no cavalry, and occupying a much too extended (three miles in width at the centre, to be held off factually in real war by 10,000.

The disposition of Sir Alfred Horsford's was complete by half-past 10 o'clock. The country allocated to him for defensive operations is by no means of a character that a general would select for a choice, yet it is not altogether destitute of eligible features.

The theory on which General Horsford disposed his forces was based on the assumption that the attack of the enemy would be delivered in form against his right. The contour of the ground as depicted on the staff maps certainly favoured the impression and the advisers of the gallant general held it to be confirmed by the circumstances that the enemy's artillery and columns of infantry had been seen against the sky line marching to the southward. It was held advisable then to be in position to meet with sufficient force any such attack.

There were, it is true, some who hinted that if Lysons meant to use those troops seriously he would take care to keep them off the sky line, instead of exhibiting them with an ostentation, with a man of his wiliness had in it a suspicious element. By half-past 10 o'clock Horsford's dispositions were complete, and he was ready for the beginning of the action. It had been intended that outposts should be thrown out on either side for the sake of practicing the volunteers in that species of military duty; but Horsford's dispositions were such that his main force virtually formed its own outposts, and no practice of the character alluded to was engaged in. Up till about 10 o'clock masses of watery mist had hung about the Downs,

and Lysons might have lit a bonfire on Newmarket hill without it being visible from Horsford's position; but after that hour the weather brightened and the sun came out. His interest in Lysons' movements was universal. A group of horsemen shewed on the High Barn Hill, and speculations at once became rife as to whether they were that general and his staff. A boy came across from the other side and reported that there were "thousands and thousands of sodgers" lying down in the valley between us and the High Barn. He was captured by a zealous bandsman, and conducted to a staff officer to impart to him what information he possessed. The boy's look of abject terror could scarcely have been stronger if he had apprehended that he was being led to summary execution. At length, at five minutes to 12 o'clock, Lysons asked the question whether his opponent was ready to begin, by a gun fired from Newmarket Hill. It was obvious, then, that not all his artillery had been moved away to the south. The reply was duly given in the same manner; and instantly as if by magic, the opposite heights were everywhere crowned by skirmishers. The question did not seem to be where was Lysons going to attack, but rather where was Lysons not going to attack? Our skirmishers were out at length, and down into the valley to confront the skirmishers of the enemy, and the action became warm, so far as skirmishing fire went all along the line. Acting on the defensive, Prince Edward's skirmishers did not exert themselves to drive in the skirmishers of the other side, only held their own against them, and waited for the issue. In anticipation of more vigorous measures, our artillery continued to pound away, and the whole of our first line, all along the right flank; came up to the summit of the ridge; so that this attack on our right, whether it was real or whether it was a feint, had forced Prince Edward to show his hand, and keep it shown. At length our right brigade threw off its torpor and moved forward just as a column of Lysons' force on his extreme left showed itself and headed down the slope towards our right. Another column was visible opposite our centre, and it appeared to be deploying with the intention to come down in line. The tactics were puzzling; but the demonstration, whether it was real or whether it was feigned, was sufficiently imposing to deter Prince Edward from withdrawing a man to any other portion of the field. How it was cannot well be told: but suddenly and without any more notice than a heavy covering artillery fire, a column of the enemy had pushed along the spur leading down from the Newmarket-hill right against the lower angle of the prescribed ground around the Warran Farm, and had turned the flank of our right centre, disconnected as it was by the imaginary morass from our left. The morass had indeed prevented Lysons from cutting straight through between the centre and the left, but it did not avail to prevent marching along its face and wedging Lord Bury's Brigade through the extreme edge of our right centre where it touched the prescribed ground. This manoeuvre placed the enemy in such a position as to be able to enfilade our whole right centre and right.

Then—but not till the success of this manoeuvre was assured—his left assumed the offensive in earnest, in order to ensure holding Horsford's right, employed with sufficient earnestness to prevent Prince Edward from detailing troops to oppose the movement that was breaking his centre. On the section of the field where Lyson's left and Horsford's right were contending, the latter

with its longer front and greater force, succeeded in turning the former's left flank. But the triumph, if it can be called a triumph, was a barren one. There is not much use in an army exerting itself on its flanks when an enemy is inside its centre. When the Prussian Guards at Koniggratz were in Chlum, Benedek was fain to own that the line of his front was untenable. The quickness of the thing was very surprising. The gun which was the signal for commencing was fired at five minutes to one. In front of Lysons' penetrating column there was a great deal of confusion worse confounded among the astonished regiments, upon which he had dropped as if from the clouds. One regiment was firing to its front unconcernedly while the enemy was in its rear, and a detachment from the second division on the left, which had fronted inwards and slowed round the trails of its guns, was firing with enterprise and vigor into the crowd of friend and foe together. It would be too much to say that the thing ended in a heterogeneous jumble, so far as concerned the "Army of Brighton;" but the confusion was so great that it was impossible to realize anything except there was nothing but confusion so far as regarded the centre. The volunteers marched well throughout the day, and seemed to work more handily than in former years. There were fewer egregious blunders, although skirmishers still displayed a propensity occasionally to open fire at impossible ranges; and although masses of troops were in cases permitted to stand phlegmatically exposed to a fire of artillery for a length of time that, had the guns been shot, would have contributed materially to the sum total of widows and orphans in our land. The decision of the umpires was of the most amusingly negative character. It would seem to convey the idea that both sides had been impartially beaten, and that the "sovereignest remedy" for a thrashing is a march past. The following is the text of the decision: "General Sir A. Horsford's right centre having been broken through, and General Lysons' left flank having been turned, both sides take up fresh positions on the raccourse." Had the action been in earnest, it seems pretty certain that one side would have found it extremely difficult to comply with this order.

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