

sionally to be able to take the field. But to the British taxpayer this is probably startling news; and now that the fact is clearly presented to him that the nation annually pays over £1,300,000 for about 110,000 half-trained troops, it is to be hoped that John Bull will demand, with no uncertain voice, the prompt reform of so undesirable a state of affairs. In one respect we think the writer is unduly severe upon the militia colonels. He reprobates with justice the absurd and useless movements upon which all attention is concentrated, to the neglect of useful and practical work; but he does not emphasize the fact that the fault lies more in the inspecting officers than in those whom they inspect. These inspecting officers are the judges of the efficiency of a regiment; on their verdict depends the estimation in which the corps is held in Pall Mall, its standing in the service; even the possible and much-coveted C.B. is influenced by their confidential reports. So the colonels of regiments "work up the questions" which their examiners are sure to ask for; and as the average inspecting officer is immensely keen on marching past and showy theatrical movements, these are incessantly practised, to the detriment of musketry and the neglect of all fighting manœuvres. This applies with equal force to the volunteers. Imagine the horror of an average inspecting officer who, when examining an auxiliary regiment, was told by its commander that he had only gone in for real fighting drill; that his men had practised few battalion movements; but that they knew the attack thoroughly, and had a fair practical idea of outposts and advanced guards! The poor man would run the risk of dying of apoplexy from rage, and when sufficiently recovered to gallop off the ground he would send in such a "confidential" as effectually to ruin colonel and regiment alike. Lord Wolseley and Sir Archibald Alison, and men of their intellectual standard, would doubtless deeply sympathize with the colonel who, having but a short time in which to train his men, preferred to teach them the practical rather than the showy part of their profession; but the average officials would combine to snub so ambitious and daring an innovator out of the service. No, the reform must come from above. Let the inspecting officers have orders from headquarters to examine and report on the capacities of each battalion in their district for the serious work of warfare; and in two years' time both militia and volunteers will have dropped much useless nonsense and acquired information invaluable in the event of their being called upon to fulfil the duty for which they are maintained—viz. the defence of their Queen and country.—*United Service Gazette.*

Adjutants.

A GOOD adjutant, like a poet, *nascitur non fit*. The position he fills requires a combination of qualities that would be rare even where the field of selections was a large one, but very rare when the selection is confined to the officers of a single regiment. Formerly it was the custom to select for the post of adjutant an officer who had passed through the ranks, and the custom still obtains, though rarer than formerly, in most cavalry regiments. As a rule the adjutants who had had the training of the ranks were the better drills. It came easier to them to thunder out at the gaping line whole pages of cautions, and tell every individual his proper place. But such adjutants were not unfrequently wanting in education and deficient in tact, although we have known many noble exceptions, when they had to command and instruct a high-spirited body of young officers. Neither were these adjutants as a rule popular with the non-commissioned officers and men. Of course there was the natural infirmity of human nature, and jealousy felt of a man who had raised himself above his fellows, and further, the adjutant who had been through the ranks knew too much about the little tricks and ways of soldiers to be pleasant. But take it all in all a commanding officer will do well if he can secure a good adjutant from among his officers. Looking to the smallness of the field for selection it speaks well for the body of officers that there should be so many good adjutants in the service. The qualifications required are numerous. An adjutant should be active in mind and body, have an old head on young shoulders, be a good rider and a leader in athletic sports, a thorough sportsman, though subordinating his sporting proclivities to his regimental duties. He should have an aptitude for drill, be methodical in his office, and well acquainted with the regulations; and should know something more about military law than is required to pass a promotion examination. He should be popular with the officers and be respected by the men, should have pleasant manners but a determined will. If he is not an early riser he will not do for adjutant, for he ought to attend the early morning parades, and it requires no little strength of mind to get up morning after morning by candle-light and walk shivering up and down the parade-ground while the recruits are doing their "wun—tow."

Some commanding officers hold, or used to hold—for we believe that they have become more rational, and see that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy—that an adjutant should never go on leave. All the same, a really enthusiastic adjutant will give up nearly all amusements

and all hopes of leave. Even if his commanding officer is a liberal-minded man, the adjutant dares not take advantage of his kindness, for he thinks that the regiment will go to the devil without him. He has not yet learned the fact that no man is indispensable, and that the affairs of an office or of a regiment, like those of the world, go on much as usual, whoever may direct or fancy he directs them. As the duties of an adjutant require so very opposite qualifications, such as an aptitude for office work and decision, and a clear head in the field, many commanding officers hold that there ought to be an office adjutant and a parade adjutant. Be that as it may, it is very hard to find an adjutant equally good in the orderly room and in the field. It need hardly be said that a good adjutant makes an excellent staff-officer, and many of the graduates of the Staff College are ex-adjutants. Doubtless there would be more but that the duties of adjutant are so exacting as to make the necessary preparation for the Staff College examination almost impossible. A career on the staff is not, however, closed to such men, and we find that several ex-adjutants are employed on the Staff who have never passed through the Staff College. It was a great improvement when the post of adjutant was thrown open to the captains as well as to the subalterns, as it doubled the field of selection. All the same, it is a mistake to retain an adjutant too long in his appointment. The best of men will weary of the daily round of arduous and after a time uninteresting duties, and it was not a bad rule of a certain commanding officer when he appointed his adjutant to make him clearly understand that he was to hold it for a limited time only—three years, if we remember right. By these means he had a larger proportion than usual of highly instructed subalterns in his regiment. This, however, was a case of keeping a dog and barking himself. Our readers will know the two kinds of regiments. The C.O.'s regiment, where the C.O. acts as adjutant, quarter master, and sergeant-major, besides commanding all the companies, and the adjutant's regiment, where the adjutant commands everybody, including the commanding officer. We do not know which is the worse type. Such regiments always fall to pieces when the guiding spirit is lost. The regiments for work are those in which every one knows his duty and does it. But even in these the good condition of the regiment rests much with the adjutant, and there is no finer position in the service for a young officer than the adjutancy of a good regiment.—*Broad Arrow.*

"Threes" or "Fours" for Cavalry.

WITH reference to a letter from "An Old Cavalry Officer," which appeared in our last issue but one, advocating the return to the formation of threes for the cavalry, we have been able to ascertain that, although threes are in almost universal use abroad, many foreign authorities look with favour on our use of fours. In most continental armies the system of "Zuge," or half-troops is employed for manœuvring purposes; on the column of march they break into threes; for dismounted fighting in groups they subdivide the zuge into half-zuge. Now with fours, if they are properly utilized, we have no need of zuge, and they give all the fractions, as required above, as well as those required for detached duties, such as outposts, advanced guards, etc., without inducing the loss of time and confusion incident to a fresh telling-off for each new duty. The method is applied in the following way:—In telling-off his squadron by fours, the leader selects a non-commissioned officer or old soldier for the No. 1 front rank of each four. This No. 1 is then in command of his four, or squad (the term group sounding too like troop to be of practical value, and section having already another signification): squads are then numbered from right to left of the squadron—thus the ordinary squadron of 32 files consists of 8 squads. If it is desired to form a service advanced guard, the squadron leader merely gives the order, "No. 1 squad, advanced party under Sergeant-Major—." In this way an advanced party of 6 privates, 2 corporals (guides), and the troop sergeant-major is at once formed. "No. 2 squad, front rank, left flanking patrol under Sergeant—." "Rear rank, right flanking patrol under Corporal—." "Nos. 3 and 4 squads, support, under Lieutenant—." "Left troop reserve." If the squadron is ordered to reconnoitre the command is merely given, "No. 1 squad, right patrol; No. 2 squad, No. 2 patrol; No. 3 squad, No. 3 patrol; No. 4 squad, No. 4 patrol." "Left troop squadron, headquarters." If the troop is to form outposts, "Nos. 1 and 2 squads, patrols;" "No. 3 squad, front rank; No. 1 cossack post; rear rank, No. 2 cossack post;" "No. 4 squad, front rank, No. 3 cossack post;" "No. 4 squad, rear rank, dismounted sentry and reliefs, and orderly." If the troop is to act dismounted, the squads form on foot in the same formation as when mounted, and are under the direction of their Nos. 1. The general regulation of movements and fire is easily carried out by the officer in command giving his orders to individual squads by their number. This system recommends itself as being particularly easy of comprehension by both men and officers, and in practice is found to save a great deal of time and confusion at critical moments. The utility of squads is great when required to advance in line through