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CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

Active services in the Eastern Townships.
The soldier's diet.
Appliances for self-dressing wounds.
A critique of the Austrian army.
The British volunteers' paid adjutants.
Reports on the new army rifle.

BATTLE TACTICS OF THE DAY.—*United Service Gazette.*

MAGAZINE AND SMALL-BORE RIFLES.—*The Times.*

REGIMENTAL NEWS.

Annual inspection of the 66th Fusiliers.
The N.B. Garrison Artillery ball.

THE RIFLE.

Annual matches of the Dufferin Rifles.
Ottawa Rifle Club spoon competition.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The standard of training for the militia.—
Gunner.

BATTLE TACTICS OF THE DAY.—*United Service Gazette.*

LONG RANGE ARTILLERY FIRE.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE GERMAN ARMY.—
United Service Gazette.

MILITIA GENERAL ORDERS, No. 16, of 28th
September, 1888.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Topics of the Week.

The Eastern Townships Militia have just had another taste of active service, the 5th Cavalry and 58th Battalion having been engaged last week and this in protecting the line of the Hereford Colonization Railway, now under construction, from the vengeance of the Italian labourers, starving for want of the pay due them by defaulting sub-contractors. The force have been under the direction of Lieut.-Col. Houghton, D.A.G., and the Brigade Major, Lieut.-Col. Mattice. The Italians at first assumed a very threatening attitude, and a volley had at one time to be fired over their heads to overawe them; but they have since determined to behave themselves, and refrain from wreaking vengeance on the property of the railway. As on every other occasion, the troops called for turned out with the greatest promptitude, and rendered the most willing obedience, notwithstanding exposure to very inclement weather.

A circular letter has been issued from the War Office by Lord Wolseley to the general officers commanding at home and abroad, calling for a report as to how it may be considered necessary to improve the diet of Her Majesty's troops, and also the method of cooking. In the latter aspect the consensus of opinion is to the effect that two systems which are on trial are much appreciated, but it is the opinion of officers commanding from whom reports have already been received that the chief drawback to the soldier's diet is that it is so similar day after day, and unless a man is able to supplement his meals by adding, at his own expense, fish, eggs, butter, cheese, etc., he cannot know what a change of diet is during the greater part of the year. It is alleged that the fuel allowed for cooking is insufficient, as also the meat ration, which, it is suggested, should be increased from three-quarters of a pound to a pound per day. Some of the reports complain about the quality of the flour supplied for the government ration of bread, and there are many advocates for an increased allowance of meat and a change of vegetable diet.

In future all officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the German Army, while serving with troops in the field, will be supplied with a bandage truss, which will enable them to dress their own wounds on the field of battle. This truss consists of an oilskin covering containing a linen bandage ten feet long, two small linen or muslin antiseptic compresses, and a safety pin. When a wound requires dressing, it is first to be washed with water, wine or spirits; the com-

presses are then applied to it, and the oilskin covering is superposed. Finally, the bandage is folded round the whole and kept in its proper place by means of the safety pin. This provident arrangement will protect the wounds from dust, smoke, and other causes of infection, until the arrival of the surgeon, and it is expected that the wounded will recover from the effects of their wounds with much greater ease and rapidity.

A British correspondent, writing on the Austrian Manœuvres, makes the following strong remarks regarding the Austrian Infantry:—"I have seen many little things that suggested loose discipline, particularly examples of officers repeating orders many times before they were obeyed, and scolding their men as housekeepers scold servants rather than as officers addressing disciplined troops. The poor fellows—I mean the Infantry—looked used up, dirty and overburdened. Once a charge was attempted, but it never rose to the dignity of a decent jog-trot, for the troops were so tired and so burdened with their accoutrements that they gave it up as hopeless. Perhaps they had not enough to eat, perhaps they had not had rest enough, perhaps they were badly handled—all three of these conditions may have existed to excuse their performance. Certain it is that it bore unfavourable comparison with similar work in the German Army. A very intelligent Artillery officer told me, later in the day, of the state of the provisioning department during the manœuvres, and if half he said is true it much resembles that of the British troops in the early part of the Crimea—that is, starvation at one point, surfeit at another. Austria has often been spoken of as lacking intelligent officers, and nothing that I saw during these operations was calculated to discredit that opinion."

Another scheme for providing the paid adjutants for the British Volunteer regiments is now being advocated. A *Morning Post* writer, signing himself "Economist," begins by suggesting that a proportion of the large number of Majors and Captains retired from the Regular Army should be employed as Adjutants of Volunteers at the rate of £150 a year each, in place of the officers on full pay now so employed, or rather, as soon as those now employed had completed their five year periods. Thus, he says, the country would save about £30,000 per annum, and a great number of retired officers would be kept in touch with the service. Colonel Stanley Bird, answering "Economist," protests against sending any "half-pay fossils" to the Volunteers, who, he says, have been enabled to make the tremendous strides they have made during the last few years "through having Adjutants appointed for five years only." "Economist" replies that he would not propose to employ any "fossils," but only officers who had not been for more than one year on the retired lists, or just about to be retired, and, moreover, to appoint them only for five years. Colonel Bird rejoins that the officers now appointed as Adjutants do often retire at the end of their five year periods, and that what "Economist" proposes is only what actually takes place (in some cases, we suppose he means). Concerning the discussion the *Volunteer Service Gazette* says:—"The only benefit that we can see in 'Economist's' scheme would be that of economy,