

THE SWISS RIFLE MEETING AT ZUG.

From an Occasional Correspondent of the Volunteer Gazette.

This great bi-annual meeting was brought to a most successful termination on Thursday, the 22nd inst., by a general presentation of prizes. Although the total money value of the prizes reached the very formidable sum of 300,000f. (£12,000), still the prizes were so numerous that the chances of against "making it pay" were very great. This, however, did not deter a few of our countrymen from trying their luck. The following English Volunteers took part in the competition; Corporal Peake, 1st Manchester; Private Towers, 27th Cheshire; Private Hack, R.H.R., Nottingham; Private Jas. Turle, 3rd Somerset; Private Holland, 3rd Gloucester City Rifles; Private Burnett, 6th Surrey; Sergt. Richards, South Middlesex.

There were four series of competitions, each differing in their details very considerably. At the first series, distance 320 yards, standing, the shooting was with a breech-loader, at a 6-foot square target, having a centre 25 inches long and 6 broad, in the middle of which was a 10-inch circular bull. All hits in the centre counted as bull's-eyes, and in the circular bull as cartons. Sixteen bulls counted as a prize of 10f., (of which five formed a handsome medal), twenty-four more counted a second prize of similar value while sixty more, or 100 in all, counted a cup, of money value 100f. The other series were some that similar, with fancy rifles, (hair trigger being allowed), and one was devoted to rapid firing. It was at the final series where the English Volunteers shot, and here most of them got prizes—Corporal Peake a cup, Privates Towers and Hack each two medals and 10f., Turle and Holland one medal and 5f. Peake, Towers, and Holland were also well in with carton, but what they will realize remains to be seen, as the awards were not made when the Britishers had left for England. The committee were somewhat disappointed at the smallness of the numbers of the English competitors, but when it was explained that Wimbledon was then occupied with the English National Meeting, their surprise vanished. It is customary to give each canton a special reception on the arrival of the "shots," and a similar one was accorded to the Englishmen. They met the committee, by appointment, at the committee-room, and, after forming up in fours, they marched, headed by the Union Jack, to a sort of dais on the Exhibition tent, where Herr Vogel-Saluzzi welcomed them in the name of the committee, and received the flag amid loud—well, not exactly cheers, but "hochs," from the bands of Private Towers, of Manchester. This gentleman responded in German, and concluded by calling upon his countrymen to give three hearty cheers for Switzerland which, with the preliminary "Hip, hip, hurrah" caused no little astonishment.

There were 124 targets incessantly engaged the whole day for eleven days, and the number of competitors exceeded 3,300. A scratch match was got up between five of the Swiss cracks, and the same number of the English, ten shots at 320 yards, standing, and ten at 500 yards, any position. At 320 yards the Swiss led very considerably, while at 500 yards (where the Swiss fired standing) the majority was considerably reduced, the Swiss ultimately winning by 18 points. It should, however, be remembered that while the English team were shooting in utter ignorance of each other's powers, and with the Swiss national arm (the Peabody breech-loader), the Swiss team comprised five leading shots in Switzerland, each shooting with

a weapon perfectly familiar to himself, which familiarity can only be acquired by observation and practice. It is necessary to add this explanation, inasmuch as the Swiss papers have been "delighting" their readers with the most extravagant accounts of the affair, in which the shooting powers of the English rifleman are not represented in a very favorable light.

SPADE DRILL.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* reports that, "notwithstanding the frequency with which the regular field days have been held during the last month at Aldershot, the subject of 'spade drill' has received a considerable share of attention. Parties varying from two to five companies strong have been repeatedly exercised under the superintendence of Colonel Laffan and the engineer officers on the station. The parades for the purpose have been usually under the command of Major-General Lysons, C.B. The Royal Engineer Train has in each case bought and distributed the necessary tools. It has been ascertained that one wing of an ordinary infantry battalion can throw up cover sufficient for the whole regiment in an hour and a quarter in easy soil, each file of two men digging a six foot length of a trench about two-and-a-half deep and five wide, and throwing the earth to the front to form a low parapet. Of course such a work can be easily run over by man or horse; but there can be no doubt that the fire of the breech-loader would prevent its being directly approached by infantry or cavalry, as long as the defenders were properly supplied with ammunition. The working parties have, it is stated, been actually able in some cases to gain rough cover for themselves in twenty minutes; but it must be remembered that the ground at Aldershot is of an especially favorable character for diggers."

The *Globe* comments on the above practice in the following words:—"Many argue that all this hue-and-cry about cover and field earthworks is mere gossip—a mare's nest. Battles, they say, will still be decided by the shock of infantry, and the combatants must sooner or later be brought face to face. Undoubtedly. But the very fact of providing troops for a final effort will necessitate their approach being covered by obstacles of some description. Infantry are now armed with the deadly breech-loader, and a regiment can pour forth a very hail of bullets, exposed to which, at close quarters, nothing living could long exist. Two parties firing into one another at this rate would simply be a repetition of the famous battle between the Killenny cats. The charge at Balaklava was a deed of heroism, *mais ce n'était pas la guerre*. And although it is no doubt a spirited and manly thing to meet your enemy foot to foot and breast to breast, it is equally effective and much more safer to shoot him from behind a wall! Looking therefore to the necessities of future warfare, we arrive at the conclusion that soldiers will instinctively seek cover from which they must be dislodged; and to enable artillery to do this effectively they must be provided with the nature of projectile most suitable for such duties. All artillerymen agree that for the attack in the field and destruction of such posts as fortified villages, woods, earth entrenchments, abattis, blockhouses, &c., a howitzer firing common shell is absolutely necessary. How is it, then, we may ask, that the Special Committee on Field Artillery Equipment for India have not included the trial of a howitzer in their programme? Why are our field artillery in this country unprovided with such an arm?"

IMPRISONMENT OF VOLUNTEERS FOR ARREARS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

A few days ago the sergeant major of a Volunteer battalion applied to the Magistrate for authority to imprison a Volunteer who was in arrear of his subscription to the corps. The Magistrate, after looking at the Act, said he had no alternative, and in default of goods to satisfy the claim the body of the Volunteer must be taken in satisfaction. We do not wish to particularise unnecessarily the corps which was reduced to the disgraceful straits implied by this anxiety to extract money from those who were either unable or unwilling to pay. What we have to remark does not depend upon the particular case, but upon the general policy; and, as regards the latter, we have no hesitation in saying that to imprison Volunteers even for the wilful non-payment of subscriptions is so odious, so impolitic, and so calculated to bring the whole movement into disrepute, that we cannot too strongly reprobate the proceeding. The tendency of legislation in this and all European countries is to abolish the penalty of imprisonment for ordinary debts. Much more ought such a penalty be deemed in applicable to those debts of honour which are contracted by Volunteers in connection with their own corps. They give their time and their exertions to make themselves citizen soldiers, and where they have contracted to do so they pay also an annual subscription for the privilege of being enrolled. But where the subscription remains unpaid, either because the Volunteer has fallen upon hard times, or because he has left the corps under some ebullition of temper, there is something inexpressibly harsh in having recourse to the penalty of imprisonment to extract the subscription or the arrears. No colonel who is fit to command a body of citizen soldiers, or who is really interested in the success of the Volunteer movement would authorise such a proceeding. There are in many corps, probably, ill-conditioned sergeants who could gladly, as a means annoyance, take advantage of a legal power which ought never to have been granted, to sue some member who was retired; but these are the dangerous men of the movement, whose high-handed proceedings ought to be forthwith firmly checked by their commanding officer. If we have no rewards for our Volunteers, at least we ought to abstain from putting them in prison for some trumpery debt of a few shillings.—*London Star*.

At the great mass meeting held in New York on Monday, to favor the cause of "Ireland and Cuba," the Hon. Richard O'Gorman, a leading lawyer, had the spunk and the honesty to speak of Old England in the following complimentary terms: "I am no flatterer of England. The tie that bound me to British allegiance was broken twenty years ago. (Great applause. No man will accuse me of flattering England but I tell you, citizens, that in my heart of hearts I honor and respect the politics which have made England the great nation she is. (Applause and bisses). I honor that sudden unhesitating outburst of honest indignation with which England rushes to the relief of any of its subjects anywhere upon whom any other nation dare lay their hands. (Applause.) I like the short, sharp, and decisive way of their dealing even with us about the Trent affair. (Applause and confusion.) There was no hesitating there. They gave us seven days to return the men, and we did it, because we knew England meant mischief."