

that of men from behind an entrenchment must be deadly in the extreme, while either to run up-hill or cross a ditch and clamber over gabions, no more unserviceable article could for the purpose be in a man's hand than a rifle and bayonet, we will at once recognize the difficulties as well as the dangers of the undertaking, and the attack would, if both sides were equally brave and similarly armed, prove a failure. "Formerly," Lieut. Maurice tells us, "all fire-arms prepared the way for the bayonet." Now the bayonet, or rather the charge, in which the bayonet counts almost for nothing is only the means by which the fruits of the fire-action are reaped when they are fully ripe. Formerly the fire-arms were used to induce such a state of things as would make it possible to bring the bayonet to bear. The fact of a bayonet charge then implied that the critical moment had come. Now the rush to seize a position implies that the critical moment has passed, or the rush is sure to be fruitless.

The foregoing plainly proves that the bayonet is only a morally efficacious weapon, useful against troops already beaten, useless against all others. *Its days then have departed, let it depart also*; but supposing that one-third of every regiment of infantry were armed with short sharp cut-and-thrust swords—have no other weapon whatever—and that these at the right moment were allowed to attack or defend a position, would they carry all before them? Most undoubtedly they would, and we need only look back about a century in our own history to find proof of this. At the battle of Preston-Pans for instance, less than 2,000 Highlanders armed only with broad-swords and wooden shields overthrew 3,000 British infantry in twenty minutes, and at the battle of Falkirk a similar feat was performed while at Cul-loden wherever the Highlanders reached with their claymores, that portion of the English line was overthrown. We are of course aware that the infantry of 1745 cannot be compared with that of 1872, but we do not mean to put swords in competition with rifles and bayonets; what we propose doing is to finish the attack with the sword instead of with a weapon now allowed on all hands to be useless—viz, the bayonet.

We therefore suggest that every infantry regiment should be composed of nine companies, 100 strong; that six of these companies should be armed only with the rifle, and the remaining three companies with nothing but a cut-and-thrust sword; that the six companies do all the skirmishing and distant fighting, and whenever it came to close quarters, the others should fall upon the enemy, sword in hand, making the attack, of course, whenever practicable, a surprise from the flank or rear. As it is well known that the most active men in a regiment are usually indifferent shots, in the three sword companies would be found a proper field in which to display their particular abilities, as smart men would be best suited for such work. In line, numbering, from the right, the sword companies would be Nos. 3, 6, and 9. In manoeuvring, each regiment could be formed into three grand divisions, the colonel commanding the centre one, and the majors those upon the flanks. The position of the sword companies would be in rear of the supports, but kept so close and in hand that they must always be ready to rush forward and complete a victory or arrest a defeat.

This is a rough outline of an idea—which to our mind could be easily made perfect and manageable system of infantry attack or defence. At present the men composing

our Foot are burdened with a weapon—the bayonet—which is allowed by all parties to have become useless. In night engagements the second companies would, we believe, be found very valuable, either in making or resisting an attack, for they would be able then to get at once to close quarters, the position of greatest safety for themselves, and of greatest danger to their opponents. Having made the suggestion, we now leave the matter in the hands of the authorities.

The artillery—a description, however brief, of its mode of engaging, taking up positions, for direct or enfilading fire, where its supports should be placed, and other equally important matters connected with that arm would take up many more pages than we can now afford to give. However, we may return to this subject at a future time, when it shall have due attention. Before concluding, we may further remark that while a greater amount of liberty must now be granted to subordinates, they must be made to understand that this does not tend to lessen their responsibility, but to increase it. To fit themselves for the increased amount of responsibility which will now rest upon their shoulders, it is only necessary for them to study the art of war, to the utmost of their ability, and if they do so, it will be a curious combination of adverse circumstances that will ever cause them to make a mistake. Everything connected with engaging the enemy is profoundly simple, and once this great truth has been recognized, to think and act promptly and with energy, will bring any one out of a difficulty, in most cases successfully, or at least creditably.

The article fully supports the opinions put forth by the *VOLUNTEER REVIEW*, that the line is the only proper formation for attack or defence. That actions would be decided as heretofore by a charge, and that the bayonet had lost neither its power nor its prestige. The proposal to arm any proportion of troops with a weapon so obsolete for infantry, as the *broad sword*, could only emanate from a closet soldier. The very examples adduced in support, show that the bayonet was at the period referred to, a clumsy weapon, only available for offence, and opposed by troops using wooden targets was rendered useless, by a well known act of manipulation; but in the hands of a soldier properly trained to its use, no swordsman, however active, could have a chance with him. It would be wiser to advocate a return to the era of pikes. The writer in the *United Service Magazine* should remember they were used in such a combination with fire arms, as he suggests broad swords should be towards the close of the 17th century.

It is evident that infantry drill will be merely simplified; that *object teaching*—peace manoeuvres, where the intelligence of the individual must be largely developed, will enter largely into the new tactics. But it is simply nonsense to advocate radical changes in a system that has been far more, severely and extensively tried and successfully too, than the Prussian idea.

It would not add materially to the number of our soldiers, to allow officers or non-commissioned officers to cap the rank and

file at their own good pleasure, nor would it make better soldiers of them if every man was an accomplished tactician or a distinguished linguist. Our troops must be trained to act as soldiers, and not to fear the consequences of necessary exposure within the range of accurate shooting.

## REVIEWS.

*Blackwood* for January contains the following articles:—

The Parisians, Book IV.  
The issues raised by the Protestant Synod of France.

A True Reformer—Part XI.  
Christian Philosophy in England.  
The Lost Secret of the Coen Group.  
Sir Tray—An Arthurian Idyl.  
Republished by the LEONARD SCOTT, Publishing Company, 140, Fulton Street, New York.

We have to acknowledge the receipt of the *Phrenological Journal* for February.

REMITTANCES Received on Subscription to THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW up to Saturday, the 1st inst.

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