

BRITISH INFANTRY—ITS FUTURE ORGANIZATION AND TACTICS.

On this subject, in connection with the instruction of officers at garrison towns, Major P. A. A. Twynham, 2nd Battalion 15th Regiment, delivered a lecture in the "Prince Consort's Library," Aldershot, on Thursday evening, the 28th ultimo. There were present about two hundred officers (including Lieutenant-General Sir J. Hope Grant, G. C. B., commanding the troops at Aldershot; Colonel G. C. Chesney, Royal Engineers; Major-General J. W. S. Smith, C.B.; Colonel Dunne, 9th Regiment; Colonel F. Hammersley, Director of Military Gymnastics), several ladies, and a large number of non-commissioned officers. The following is an outline of the lecture:—

Having quoted some appropriate paragraphs from the writings of Col. Hamley, the lecturer referred to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, which was fresh in the memory of his audience. It was not because of any superiority of the German race, as asserted by some people, that one nation was left stranded. During the campaigns of Napoleon the First, in the years of 1805, 7, &c. the German soldier of those days was as much inferior to the French soldier as the former has proved himself to the latter in the recent campaign. Coupled with a high order of intelligence, the Germans understood the art of war. In the French army there was an absence of discipline and training. It was imbued with democratic ideas, and paid more attention to politics than to military duties. He next directed the attention of his audience to the organization and tactics which the British infantry ought to adopt. Great modifications are necessary. He (Major Twynham) selected the infantry for his subject, because it is the branch of the service to which he belongs. He would not be dogmatic; he would only throw out suggestions. From our past military history, the British infantry, it would appear, was equal to that of another nation. From 1809 to 1815 it distinguished itself in the war against Napoleon the First. The recent campaign in France demonstrated that we must modify our military system. In India and China we have established our superiority. It has been asserted that India furnished a school for the art of war, in the same way that Algeria furnished a similar field for the French. The recent war proved how ineffectual was the training derived therein; and we would find ourselves in a similarly pretty fix, if suddenly called upon to face a highly organized army. In former days six hundred yards was the maximum range of artillery, and the final assault could be made without reinforcements. Wars then were of long duration. The first campaign was simply a training field, and during its continuance there was ample time for preparation. Napoleon I. had unlimited control, yet the army which he assembled at Boulogne, for the invasion of England, was not completed before the expiration of twelve months. In our days large armies are concentrated, and numerous victories are gained in few weeks. Nowadays a soldier can carry his dinner in his waistcoat pocket. Mechanical arts are nearly perfect, roads are more numerous; there are railways and telegraphs, and other means of transit and communication, that did not exist in the days of the first Napoleon. In addition to these every military individual is supposed to be endowed with more intelligence; weapons are of great accuracy, and capable of sending a deadly missile one thousand yards; cover is eagerly looked for, and movements must be more rapid. Compared with the present period, the pre-

parations for the Crimean war were slow. On the 27th of March, 1854, war was declared against Russia. England and France sent a contingent of 20,000 men each. The first gun was fired off Odessa, and on the 20th September, 1854, the first battle was fought on the river Alma, against 40,000 men—that is, about five months after war had been declared. In the recent campaign two battles were fought within eighteen days after the declaration of war by Napoleon III. The lecturer next sketched the campaign of 1814 on the Meuse, Moselle, and Rhine. Napoleon had 87,000 men, defended a line three hundred miles in extent. The Germans, with Austrians and Russians, had 300,000 men, and a reserve of 50,000 men; yet not until April was Napoleon driven towards Paris. Napoleon III. had 264,000 men; the roads at his command were more than double the number in existence in the days of his uncle, besides a network of railways connected with Paris. The Germans had 450,000 men concentrated in a few days, and had ample means for bringing up reserves, together with 1450 guns. On this occasion they had no assistance from Austria. The campaign opened on the 2d of August, 1870. In a month Napoleon III. was ruined, in six weeks Paris threatened. They made their infantry attack in columns, covered by skirmishers. In the beginning the long range of the chassepot gave the French a decided superiority. The Germans soon found this out and that within a range of 1200 or 1400 yards, there was safety. The French infantry was overloaded. At the battle of Woerth about half-past two p.m. a lull occurred, and the French on the right were ordered to proceed with all haste to the scene of conflict. To facilitate their progress they were ordered to leave their knapsacks behind. During the heat of the engagement they remembered that in their packs they had left their ammunition! The officers and men of the French showed want of intelligence and incapacity to understand the nature of the country through which they passed. Attempts have been made to attribute the cause of these defects to promotion from the ranks, which has been carried on to a greater extent in the British than in the French Army. Nothing was to be feared from the system of promoting men of good morals and intelligence from the ranks; when a man is so promoted he ought to be made sensible that, in moral worth and other qualities, he is not inferior to any officer in his corps. The lecturer next quoted from the Duke of Mecklenburg's account of the battle of Gravelotte, which sealed the fate of columns. In that action six thousand men fell in ten minutes. The Saxons turned the enemy's right. Owing to a dense mist, objects could not be seen beyond five hundred yards. The German soldier marched straight to the front fully confident in the intelligence of his comrade—who would take care that none of the enemy remained on his right and left. He peeps into vineyards, looks into hedges, examines buildings, farmyards and coppices, and sees that no enemy is concealed in his route. The Germans generally carried their knapsacks, but not so full as ours. The British army landed in the Crimea without knapsacks, and it was soon learnt that a great mistake was committed; they carried their blanket and great-coat folded and strapped in them, were one shirt, one pair of socks, one razor, and a knife and fork. The Germans sometimes carried the great-coat *en banderole*; their ordinary day's march is from sixteen to twenty-four miles. They avail themselves of the shelter of anything in the shape of a building, in which they lie like herrings in a barrel. We are averse to

changes. In advocating any changes we have to contend with feelings, and some will cling to long-established usages. Modern warfare lays down two short definitions—short and decisive. We ought to have three armies of 40,000 men each ready to take the field. Men who do not wish to join the Militia ought to join the Volunteers. France gives two per cent. to the army. We ought to have the nucleus of an efficient army. He would divide the subject, "Tactics," into three heads. First he would show how a regiment and its reserve should be constituted, he would divide it into four battalions—Mr. Cardwell's scheme was a great step in advance. Many of the apparent difficulties connected with it will vanish, the service will become more popular, and each regiment will have a home; desertion will be done away with, and the nation will take greater interest in the army. An attempt to encourage recruiting was made as far back as the year 1872; but the localization was not carried into effect. The lecturer entered fully into Mr. Cardwell's plan, and highly commended it. He next dealt with what is called *esprit de corps*, which he translated as one liking his own regiment best, hiding its faults, and hating every other regiment. He trusted such narrow ideas would soon vanish, and that an *esprit de corps* would pervade the whole army. He would have each regiment divided into first and second battalions, and two battalions of Militia, with one battalion of Volunteers. By this plan two battalions, at war strength, could be always at home. A sufficient number of men to serve abroad for pension can be always found. Our battalion companies are too small; a battalion ought to consist of 800 men, divided into four companies of 200 men each; captains ought to be mounted. Their present small companies they can hardly superintend while skirmishing. One major to each battalion ought to suffice; and the adjutant ought to perform the duties of musketry instructor. Training does not mean more drill; it is after the drill-sergeant has done with the recruit that his duties should commence. The lecture-room should go hand-in-hand with the barrack-square and our officers ought to keep pace with the times. Under the second head, "Equipments," he would include arms, accoutrements, &c. During the siege of Sebastopol the officers discontinued wearing steel scabbards, because they furnished a mark for the Russian gunners. Knickerbockers would be more suitable than trousers, because it is below the knee a man is more liable to become wet, and by wearing the knickerbockers he could dry himself more quickly. Each company ought to have a pack-animal to carry ammunition. It could follow anywhere and get more easily under cover than a wrgon. A sergeant returning from a wrgon with his hat and hands full of cartridges loses one half of them. Tactics he would divide into two heads. He has no faith in the loose system of drill. In modern drill the touch ought to be dispensed with, and more reliance placed on the intelligence of the soldier. He denied that an artilleryman or a cavalryman was more intelligent than a man of the infantry. A man ought to be taught to march up to a point without regard to the touch; not to fire unless under cover or lying down; supports and reserves in line ought to open out, like a fan, but to keep ranks until the last rush for the final assault. Skirmishers, as at present, to advance in single line, and the section alternately one section covering another, and all to take advantage of cover. He would divide a company of 200 men into four sections of 50 men each, the first and third sections to be