

NOTES AND QUERIES.

(Continued from our last.)

Permit me to correct a typographical error (due I suppose to my bad writing) in your issue of the 24th instant. In mentioning the American Field Exercise which I read, it is called, in parenthesis, "Cosey & Hinks". What I really wrote was (Casey's, I think) for I was not perfectly sure of the name. Also in speaking of the abolition of white trousers by the Admiralty, the measure was taken in the case of the *Marines*, not *Mariners*.

In reference to the abolition of pivot flanks, it may be noted that that step would, I presume, necessitate a caution in directing a squad or company to form to the front from files, or to increase a front from fours, as to whether the formation or increase should be on the right or left of the leading file or four. Some such caution, I should suppose, as "On the Right (or Left) Front Form."

Since writing my last article it occurred to me that, to form a two-deep square from column on the same principle in file as I venture to suggest for a four deep square in sections of fours, would be a somewhat "draggling" manœuvre, infinitely less ready than the outward wheel of subdivisions. Yet to retain either "sections" or "subdivisions" would mar the simplicity of such a system, the chief benefit of which would be its rigid restriction to one character of movement. But the difficulty is not a great one.

Suppose a company to consist of an even number of fours, say six, the company would be instructed, in proving for a two deep square, to wheel outwards, three fours to the right—three to the left, thus retaining the subdivision's reality without the additional responsibility on the men's minds of being pivot men. And it must be remembered that although a larger number of men would in effect be pivots of fours, they would be relieved from bearing in mind whether they were right or left files, and from all the intricacies of the present fours' formation; and I think this freedom from the necessity of remembering any but the one formation; the compact smallness of the body, and the constancy of the practice, would combine to produce precision and to obviate confusion. I would also always wheel them on a movable pivot. A further advantage would it seems to me attend this system. Eight men got together anywhere—taught the cadence of the quick and double steps, to face, to wheel, and to turn together on the march, would be fit to take their place in a company, a complete component part of it. Further, the constant practice of wheeling in small bodies would, I think, tend eventually to the steadiness of company wheel.

But to resume the formation of a two-deep square. Suppose companies to consist of

an uneven number of sections of fours, say seven, I would cause the three right sections and the three left sections to wheel outwards, respectively to the right and left. The centre section of four would wheel, front rank to the right—rear rank to the left, and the men composing it would, with the supernumeraries, strengthen the square, and be on hand to repair casualties in the two outer ranks of their respective companies.

A difficulty would also appear to arise out of Sec. 16, (Light Infantry) Part 5, p. 389, F.E., in the formation of squares by a Reserve. But I would try to meet it in this way: With two companies wheel the fours to the right and turn them to the left, then close them on the centre, face the rear company about, and dress back the flanks as now directed.

For four companies, where at present subdivisions would be required, either the front and rear companies might form four deep in the same manner, *i. e.* wheeling to the right and turning to the left, and the centre companies might form the side faces in the manner suggested in a previous article; or—what would be far more simple—close the second and fourth companies on the first and third, and dress back the flanks to an oval, after facing the rear companies about.

I noticed in a recent issue of the REVIEW, a recommendation to Volunteer officers to mend their warp in the matter of uniform (or uniformity) through the medium of Mr. McEachren, who no doubt, merits all that can be said in his favor. But it must be borne in mind that Mr. McEachren's prices are, I will not say unnecessarily high, for doubtless, first rate articles, but high enough to render the accommodation afforded by the Department in the purchase of uniform a boon to many officers. For, be it remembered, the Force neither is nor can be entirely officered by gentlemen to whom expense is unimportant, a particular in which it essentially differs from the Volunteer Force of England. Sir George Cartier has been stated to have said, that the honor of being a Volunteer officer should be sufficient recompense for his services. I am very far from underrating that honor, but I nevertheless think, that if Sir George did say so (which I doubt) he would have evinced great ignorance of the conditions under which the rural Militia exists. This, in fact, is a point on which I do not think the knowledge at Headquarters is either very extensive or very profound, and I do not know an officer who differs with me in opinion.

In Canada, the Militia is the standing Force of the country, and the back-bone of its defence, and not, as in England, a mere auxiliary and reserve to a Regular army. On the contrary, in the event of trouble here, the Regulars would be (numerically) but auxiliary to the Militia. It therefore requires entirely different treatment, indeed a treatment very different from that with which the Legislature favors it.

Such a Force in an essentially agricultural country must be largely officered by its stalwart yeomanry, and although doubtless by the pick of that body, yet by men not so wealthy as to be able to afford much gratuitous service in addition to the sacrifices entailed on them by the disturbance of their farming operations to say nothing of company expenses. I doubt therefore whether Mr. McEachren will be appreciated so widely as might perhaps be desirable, I will not, however, pursue the train of ideas to which this subject gives rise, as it would lead me to remarks on the general treatment of officers under the new Act, and on the tenor of that measure in many particulars. In common with, I believe, the majority of Volunteer officers, I have conceived a different and far less favorable opinion of the merits of that enactment than is entertained by the REVIEW. But however strong the temptation to do otherwise, I rather desire to abstain from criticism on a measure which (whether your estimate or ours prove in the end the more correct, will shortly come into operation, and the action of which should not therefore be unnecessarily prejudiced. One thing, however, I must say, except as it may influence money matters under a mistaken estimate of the value of the estimate of the value of the measure, the opinion of the British press and public is not worth a rush, as to its real merits, as they simply know nothing about it. Whatever may prove to be the advantages of the Act (and I trust they will be found to be more numerous and important than is generally anticipated) it is certain that it allows but a very insufficient amount of drill. In proportion, therefore, to the insufficiency of the period prescribed is the importance of a system of tactics of extreme simplicity, and I trust the day is near at hand when the pinuriously limited time of the Militia recruit will cease to be consumed and his mind embarrassed by the vexatious minutiae involved in the dogma of "Right in front, left's the Pivot," and by unnecessary movements arising from the distinction of ranks, such as the "countermarch of ranks," and the change of front of a column by the wheel of subdivisions.

It is to be hoped that when the arrangements for carrying out the new Act shall have been made, a new Militia List will be published, and that some thing like a definite position, rank, and seniority will be established; for it is far from pleasant to the *bona-fide* working officers of a force so decidedly organized, to hold the indefinite and unsatisfactory position which they now occupy, whilst a few fortunate gentlemen compose a select little list with a definite brevet rank at the head of us, though I do not mean to say that in most cases their services do not entitle them to the advantage of their position. There are also some seniorities in the List of Battalions rather unintelligible to the uninitiated, who do not