

nance has raised himself into his accidental position by his transcendent ability, and the "halo" of a war service carried out in the days of weapons now obsolete, but his post is more political than regimental, and his proclivities and antecedent views have hitherto coincided with those of the Director of Artillery and the appointment of safe men on the grand old R. A. principle that "any change was to be deprecated."

But, after all, these things are a necessity in all military officialism in constitutional countries. Military improvement is thought to mean money expenditure, therefore, safe, slow men are selected to offer the necessary obstruction until it is found the accumulation costs more to clear off than the progressiveness of a live man at the head of a Department.

Sir Frederick Roberts.

General Sir Frederick S. Roberts, V.C., G.C.B., Royal Artillery, was present yesterday afternoon at a grand concert given in the Recreation Rooms, Royal Artillery Barracks, Woolwich, by the Royal Artillery band, and met with a most enthusiastic reception.

Last evening the gallant officer was present at a banquet given in his honor by the officers of the Royal Artillery, in their mess-room, Woolwich, Lieutenant-General John Turner, C.B., commandant of the district, presided, and the guest of the evening sat on his right.

The toasts of "Her Majesty the Queen" and "The Prince and Princess of Wales and the rest of the Royal Family," having been duly honored.

GENERAL TURNER said he rose to propose the toast of the evening. He was commanded by H. R. H. the Duke of Cambridge, as colonel of the regiment, to say how glad he should have been to have been able to take the chair that evening, but, as they all know, he was with the Prince of Wales at Sandringham, to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Her Royal Highness the Princess; the duty, therefore, devolved upon him.

SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS, who was for some time kept silent by applause, said it was with great pride that he found himself the honored guest at the head-quarters of the regiment in which he began his soldier's career 29 years ago. (Cheers.) In that old mess-house, so long associated with the history of the regiment, surrounded by so many of his brother officers, he felt at home, and he might say a few words without reserve respecting their especial branch of the service. The campaign in Afghanistan was remarkable for the fact that he, an Artilleryman, held a high and responsible army command; but he was glad to say that he was not the only Artillery officer in that position. (Hear, hear.) He congratulated the regiment on so many of its representatives being employed in duties beyond the regiment; and if the verdict of the Army and the country was in favor of their conduct, he hoped that opportunities would be found in the future for their successors to aspire to and qualify themselves for high and responsible commands. In commending the officers of the corps who had distinguished themselves, he referred to Sir Michael Biddulph as one of the first to reach Candahar and the Helmand, and to Major-General Hills, who, after performing delicate and troublesome duties as Governor of Kabul, was selected to command a division in Afghanistan.

General Roberts, whose appointment as Deputy-Adjutant-General of Royal Artillery had afforded much satisfaction, held an onerous and difficult position on the line of communication, and proved an able and efficient commander. Lieut.-Colonel Chapman was senior officer of the Army Staff under Sir Donald Stewart during the march from Candahar to Cabul, and accompanied him (General Roberts) in the same capacity from Cabul to Candahar (cheer); and in Major Pretyman as aide-de-camp he had a valued friend, upon whose tact and judgment he could always rely. Among those who had achieved honor more especially in connection with the regiment he enumerated Major-General Alexander Lindsay, Colonel Johnson, Colonel William Stirling, Captain Phipps, Lieutenant-Colonel Sydney Parry, Major Sir John Campbell, Captain Stude, and others, with a special tribute to the merits of each; and in speaking of those whom they mourned as dead, he said that Major Blackwood and the whole of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of his battery, in the hour of defeat and in the most trying circumstances, bravely upheld the credit of the regiment. (Cheers.) He testified not only to the bravery, but to the irrefragable behavior of all ranks throughout the campaign. Among those they mourned were Captain Kelso and Lieutenant Maclaine, so cruelly cut off in his promising career. Captain Shafto, and, he added, Quarter-Master Sergeant Mansfield of the Horse Artillery, who performed the duty of Provost at Cabul, and who was one of the steady, reliable, non-commissioned officers who were the pride of the Army. Altogether the regiment had well maintained the character which the Gunners had earned in years past while fighting for their Sovereign and their country. He had spoken too long, for a soldier's speech should be short, and he would conclude by expressing his regard for the regiment and thanking General Turner and his brother officers for the gratifying welcome they had given him to Woolwich. (Loud cheers.)

The return of General Sir F. Roberts from the scene of his recent successes leads, not unnaturally, to an investigation of the theory so commonly accepted, that officers of Artillery and Engineers are unfit to hold important commands in the field. Whilst the principle has been tacitly approved by many, none have, we believe, evinced sufficient courage or honesty to place on record the hypothesis which led to the assumption of this fallacy.

It is, of course, the most elementary truism of military science that infantry is the mainspring of the fighting machine, and that other arms are merely auxiliaries. But whilst conceding readily this axiom, we must, at the outset claim a certain equality for the arms thus set aside. We are anxious to discover the process

of elimination by which the opponents of the Ordnance Corps remove them from consideration, and grant to the cavalry a species of second place verging, so far as the question of the fitness of its officers for command is concerned, on equality. Regarding the officers of the Army in the abstract, we cannot at the outset discern any material difference in the stamp of young men presenting themselves as candidates for admission to Sandhurst and Woolwich, or striving to slide into the Service, as it were, by the newly-invented *facile desensus* of the Militia. Any difference which may exist tends naturally as regards education somewhat in favour of the candidates for Woolwich, whereas these youths, judging from statistics of the running-path and the cricket field, are in no marked degree inferior to stamina or physique. A scrutiny of the curriculum followed at Woolwich or Sandhurst does not, in our opinion, tend to disclose any inherent disability for the exercise of command generated or fostered in the alumni of the Royal Military Academy.

Passing next into a consideration of the conditions existing in the service, we arrive at the first position tending in any degree to support the case of those who would exclude alike the "ginner" and the "sapper" from commands in the field.

Regarding first the case of the Engineers, we find the officers of this corps too often placed at a disadvantage as regards the acquisition of a practical knowledge of the art of war. Many of them from their high scientific attainments are tempted by high salaries to turn their backs for a time on soldiering proper, and to perform the functions of various important berths in semi-civil employ, for which they are especially qualified. Others, again, are even in the performance of their military duties too often isolated and removed from any possibility of intercourse and association with other arms of the Service. This state of affairs is, however, intermittent, and we have no hesitation in affirming that the early training of Woolwich, strongly supplemented by the exhaustive studies, practical as well as theoretical, carried on at the School of Military Engineering, implants in the officer of this arm a substratum of general military knowledge, which very little practice will always bring to the surface. As regards a leaning or bias with respect to the use of troops of any arm, we defy the most bitter opponents (and there are such) of the Royal Engineers to show anything in the conditions of early training or subsequent service of officers of this cloth conducive to a tendency on their part to give undue prominence in a strategical or tactical sense to any one arm of the Service.

The artilleryist, unlike the comrade of his cadet life, is not, as a rule, separated from intercourse with those of other branches of the Service, but there is, perhaps, much in the nature of his work to render him a specialist, and it may, with some show of justice, be urged that he might, if entrusted with command, display a tendency to make too lavish a use of his especial weapon, and to relegate the infantry at his disposal to a subordinate part quite out of keeping with the immense power derived by them from the use of the modern small arm.

In strong opposition to this single argument we urge the advantages accruing to a general who is acquainted with the exact powers and failings of an arm which, though only auxiliary, has of late years played such a prominent part in the majority of campaigns. And further, it is patent that the acquisition of a general knowledge of the functions and capabilities of infantry is in the reach of most earnest students of the art of war, whereas the study of artillery, however closely pursued in theory, confers no practical knowledge to the student of the real powers and failings of the arm. The instances of generals whose earlier years were passed in the infantry, who on assumption of command displayed a total disregard of their artillery, could be cited freely. There are few cases of artillery commanders to investigate, but we do not think it can fairly be urged that their dispositions have displayed any gross ignorance of the general principles involved in the use of the dominant arm.

Perhaps the greatest stain on the straightforward manliness of the officers of the British army is the unfortunate but too palpable jealousy they have shown of the old ordnance corps in the attempt to bolster up the theory that such officers are not fit for the command of all arms. It is perfectly well known that garrison artillery are infantry in blue coats in addition to being gunners, and that a field or horse artilleryman has to learn all cavalry drills and duties; indeed, the effectual command a field battery, which is in itself an often independent, tactical unit necessitates the habitual exercise of the tactical qualifications of a General, and yet when a complete revolution in the weapons and conditions of war was first discovered to the British nation, the want of scientific military education among the officers entrusted with commands, it was found necessary to establish the Staff College. The only text-book on the modern art of war that existed in the English language had to be written by an Artillery officer, Col. Hamley, who also may be said to have formed the Staff College, since which he has been carefully excluded from any army command. The Staff College was at first said to be competitive for all arms, but has only taught to officers between 25 and 40 what Woolwich cadets learn at 16, it was naturally found at the first examination that the first half of the list were Engineer and Artillery officers. These corps were at once so heavily handicapped as to be practically excluded from army staff employ. Those who did force themselves through in spite of the restrictions against their entry were always thrust back into regimental or gunnery employ, to the exclusion of their better qualified brother officers who had made gunnery their speciality. By the way what was taught of that art at the Staff College, was taught by a Royal Engineer, a gunnery instructor or professor of artillery has never been sanctioned as part of the instructional staff at the Staff College.

*An artillery General has shown how to dispense entirely with his own arm, wheeled artillery, when necessity prescribed such a course.