

THE AUTUMN MANOEUVRES.

THE SCENE OF OPERATIONS.

(From the Broad Arrow, August 31.)

(Continued from Page 545.)

Southern Army.—The proceedings of the southern army were in the nature of an episode. After a march, prolonged by a totally unlooked for piece of international courtesy, Sir A. Horsford's Division, reached its old position at Blandford to find that the enemy had given it the slip, and, making a wide detour had actually gone in search of them to Bottle Bush Down, the very point which they quitted this morning. In other words the 1st and 2nd Divisions had changed places, selecting routes at opposite sides of the main Salisbury road, so that the long lines of transport and of military might not clash, and so wide apart that they did not even see anything of each other in the distance. Sir A. Horsford's division struck its tents punctually at half past eight o'clock, and it was most interesting to watch the various divisions and brigades start and move off successively by roads which first diverged across the undulating park like surface of Bottle Bush Down, to converge again and re unite some miles further on Launceston Down. Here after a dusty march of six or seven miles, a surprise awaited them. They were to halt and lie down—an order not unwelcome in itself—but the explanation was even more surprising than if they had by accident, stumbled upon the main force of General Brownrigg. After yesterday's proceedings, a pitched battle would have been comparatively speaking, in the natural order of things, however little desired at the moment by hungry men. But the reason for this sudden interruption of a march undertaken to beat up the enemy's quarters, was that the envoys of a friendly power had arrived, desiring to see the troops of Queen Victoria, the particular flag under which they were serving at the moment being to them a matter of secondary importance. As hastily reported by an aide de camp in passing, "the Japanese ambassadors are on in front!" And truly there they were in two carriages, with their interpreters &c, surrounded by the whole of the headquarters staff. It appeared that with the energetic and enquiring spirit of their nation, the Japanese had taken Blandford on their way to visit the Portsmouth fortifications; and Sir John Michell could do no less than offer to show them what there was to be seen. Orders were at once given for a general march past—a movement for which the springy level turf of Launceston Down is eminently well adapted. First came the Light Cavalry Brigade, under Col. Baker, consisting of the 7th and 10th Hussars, and the 12th Lancers. Nothing could possibly be finer than the appearance of all three of these regiments, and our visitors from the far East were evidently not a little surprised at the glorious pageant of clean built troopers and well bred horses. Then a battery of Horse Artillery went by at a walk, their dressing it is needless to say was perfection. Then came the infantry and splendid regiments of Foot Guards leading the way; and remembering that they had been marching with knapsacks for the last three hours, there was little fault to be found either with the regulars or Militia as they marched past Sir Alfred Horsford and his foreign guests. But yet a prettier sight than all was in store for them. With a rattle and a clash, the whole brigade of cavalry went by at a sharp trot. Then there

was a whirl of dust, and a suppressed murmur of admiration from the crowd, in which the foreign visitors did not hesitate to join, as the Horse Artillery dashed by at a gallop. Then a battery or two was unlimbered, and some powder burnt in honor of our guests. The new 16 pounders were examined with much curiosity by the Japanese, who were profuse in their acknowledgments of the compliment paid them by Sir A. Horsford, and of the admirable state of the troops under his orders.

The duties of hospitality being duly performed, the 1st Division resumed its march in two columns, and so reached at a little past one o'clock the now well known height of Racecourse Down. As the men marched on to the ground, the Guards leading the way, it was easy to see that their outing to Bottle Bush Down had done them no little good. I was compelled to mention the fact that on Saturday the Guards looked just a little "done" after their march. One could not have said as much of them to day, for the big men in bearskins were a glorious sight as they tramped merrily across the downs. Not the Rifle Brigade itself went better than did the Guards to day. The march out to Bottle Bush had evidently done our crack regiments good in more ways than one. Tent pitching on Racecourse Down was a comparatively easy matter, as many though not all of the regiments occupied the same ground as they did previous to marching out, and consequently the digging of trenches, &c., was a very easy operation. Within twenty minutes of the baggage wagons' arrival on the ground, the tents were up and the cords being tightened. So far as I was able to learn, the men of the 1st Division, although they had had a long day, were in excellent trim, and not in the least too fatigued by their steady march. "Fath and its right hungry we be," said a Kilkenny Militiaman; and that was the only semblance of a complaint that ever I heard.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 28.

Southern Army.—In accordance with the programme of yesterday, the troops of the 4th Division left Silchester and Pamber at six o'clock this morning. Lord Mark Kerr has given orders that on this occasion the infantry brigades should march in one column instead of in two; and that the cavalry brigades should take a different route and meet the column at a particular point before reaching the encamping ground. After the advanced guard, the three infantry brigades set out in order of their numbers. First came Maxwell's, consisting of the 46th Regiment and the 102nd Fusiliers; next, Col. Pakenham's, made up of the 2nd Battalion 4th Regiment and the 27th Regiment; and lastly Col. Stephenson's, composed of the 30th Regiment and the 2nd Battalion Rifle Brigade. Each brigade was accompanied by Artillery and Engineers. Lord Mark Kerr and his staff were with the column. The route taken was by Aldermaston Park on the right. Having passed through the village they turned sharp to the left, and here in a lovely green lane leading to the river Emborne, the Division met an unexpected foe, whose sudden appearance caused no little surprise, and was well nigh being the occasion of a very serious embarrassment to the general and his staff, and a battery of Artillery that was immediately behind them. Lord Mark Kerr had just ridden back from the head of Maxwell's brigade, and was just between the Engineers and the three regimental carts of the 102nd Fusiliers, when his horse and that of Captain Poole, the brigade major of the First Brigade, began to jump and kick violently. In an instant

afterwards, the general and his staff found themselves literally enveloped by myriads of wasps, who fastened on them and their horses and began to sting horribly. Lord Mark Kerr had some half a dozen of the vicious insects stuck on to the back of his head, and two or three about his face, all of them stinging in perfect unison. The horse which Captain Salis Schwabe, aide de camp was riding received six very bad stings. The general's horse made a spring of about twenty paces forward, in an endeavor to escape from his tormentors, but they were not to be baffled. They held on as long as they could, and were supported by equally determined reinforcements. Lord Mark Kerr saw that if the regimental carts, which were close at hand, should come up, the wasps would set upon the cart horses, and that a scene of dangerous confusion would set in throughout the whole column, a battery of artillery lying next in the march. He at once shouted out an order for the regimental carts to halt, and at the same instant landed his horse in magnificent style over a fence and into a barley field, through which he saw the remainder of the column might pass by a flank movement and so outmanoeuvre the wasps. At the further end of the barley field was a gate; but as there was no outlet at the end nearest to Maxwell's brigade, the general ordered the engineers to make a gap in the fence. When they were engaged in this work, the farmer who owns the barley came up, and supposing that what he saw was a portion of the autumn manoeuvres, regularly, sketched out, beforehand, he said to Lord Mark, "General I don't think these ere autumn manoeuvres will be good for the harvest." Lord Mark told him how matters stood, and that if the remainder of the column did not avail themselves of the barley field they would have to march a round of two or three miles to avoid the wasps. The Engineers had the gap made in a minute or two, and the troops began to march in files two deep, along a path in the barley field, in order not to injure the crop. This movement had scarcely commenced when the adjutant of the 4th Regiment with a sergeant and a private announced that the wasps had "settled down" took up some sods and clapped them upon the wasp's nest, the adjutant himself, drying home the sods with a blow of the spade. The enemy having been thus securely disposed of, the remainder of the column continued its march through the lane. The river was crossed at Sherbert Bridge, and the three brigades passed on through Brimpton, to Crookham Heath.

The cavalry brigade consisting of the 9th Lancers, the 13th Hussars, the 19th Hussars and the E Battery C Brigade of Royal Horse Artillery, under the command of Major General Shiute, took the route by Tadly Common, Holt Common, Healdy Common, over the Emborne river at Knightsbridge, and so on direct to Greenham Heath. "The morning was lovely, and the gentry and peasantry of the country, on both lines of march, turned out in considerable numbers to witness the march. In every village the soldiers received manifestations of welcome, and their way throughout the twelve miles was through landscape scenery of a completely English character. They passed lordly parks wide heaths, brilliant with heather bloom, smiling village greens, and cottages, covered with flower gardens in front; flowers all round the doors and windows, flowers on every window sill. In more than one place there were large companies of ladies and gentlemen between whom and the officers of the various battalions many a recognition was exchanged. The cottage population