

after the report of Major Walcott, the Select Committee considering the ball "useless and chimerical," no further trial was accorded. The conical ball question was thus once more doomed to oblivion.

In process of time the fabulous ranges of the "*Carabine à Tige*" were heard of, and when it was ascertained that the French riflemen potted the gunners on the ramparts of Rome with such rapidity that they could not stand to their guns before a rifle nearly a mile distant, the cone shape once more turned up, and Captain Minié came forward as the champion of the old expanding ball. The tocsin of war was sounded in the East; the public were crying aloud for British arms to be put upon an equality with those of foreign armies; the veterans who had earned their laurels under poor old "Brown Bess" stuck faithfully to her in her death-struggle, and dropped a tear over the triumph of new-fangled notions.

In the middle of last century Lieutenant-General Parker's ball was thrown aside; at the end of the century, Mr. Stanton's shared the same fate; Mr. Greener's followed in 1836 with equal ill success; Captain Minié's had a short reign, and was in turn superseded by the more solid and superior ball now in use, and for which the country is indebted to the experimental perseverance of Mr. Pritchett; and if ever things obtain their right names, the weapon of the British army will be called the Pritchett ball and not the Minié rifle; but as the world persists in calling the Missouri the Mississippi, I suppose the British public will behave equally shabbily by Mr. Pritchett. The reader will judge for himself of the respective credit due to the various persons through whose ingenuity we have at length succeeded in obtaining the present efficient ball, the wounds from which are more frightful than pen can portray.

There is, however, one lesson which we should learn from the great opposition there has been to the introduction of the conical ball, and that is, the advantage of remodelling the department to which such inventions are referred. The foregoing remarks appear to me conclusive evidence that the testing of fire-arms should not be left to age and experience alone. Prejudice is all but inseparable from age—young and fresh blood is a powerful auxiliary. What I would suggest is, that there should be a special examination to qualify officers of the engineers and artillery to sit in judgment on so important a subject as arms and missiles; and I would then propose that two officers of the former corps, and five of the latter, be selected from those below the rank of field-officer, to form a separate and junior Board, and that each Board should send in its own report. The method of selection which I would suggest is by ballot or vote of those officers of the same rank in their respective corps; for I feel sure that those who live most together are the best acquainted with one another's talents. If two Boards are objectionable, form one Board, of which one-half shall be of the junior rank; and if they be equally divided in opinion, let the higher authority appoint an umpire and order a second trial.

Remember how long the now all-but-forgotten "Brown Bess" kept the field against the adversary which has since proved her immeasurable superior; and let the future prove that past experience has not been entirely thrown away. Trials may be troublesome, but officers are paid for taking trouble; and the ingenuity of inventors will always be quickened in pro-

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