

DRILL REFORM.

To the Editor of the Volunteer Service Gazette.

Sir,—In your very practical and business like article on "Drill Reform" in last Saturday's Gazette, you say: "We ourselves go, perhaps, if anything, rather farther than either of our correspondents, alluding to Colonel Macdonald, of Edinburgh, and myself, "and hold that in future wars we shall have to give up 'the touch' altogether, and even in line fight some paces apart; in other words in skirmishing order." But I can assure you, sir, that I go quite as far as this, and I has been my opinion for some time.

I have long felt that, with the increased extent of range and precision of fire possessed by the Enfield, even before conversion, squares had become obsolete, and our famous bayonet charge, except under some lucky accident, a thing of the past; that success in future battles must depend more than ever on the accurate shooting and superior intelligence of the soldiers, and that we should have to give up many of our solid formations in consequence.

But it was on seeing the fire of the Snider which I did for the first time last year, at our Easter Monday Review at Dover, that I was forced to look the subject more fully in the face; and the more I thought about it, the more was I puzzled to find a satisfactory solution to the important question, "How can we best encounter such a fire, and in what manner shall we engage an enemy so armed?" I confess, sir, I have not even to the present time, worked out the problem to my own satisfaction. But of this I felt perfectly sure, we must never make use of the formation as laid down in the authorized "Field Exercise."

Cover for the soldier, as far as can be possibly obtained, and good shooting, which implies a correct judgement of distances, seemed the first necessities to success in the field. Both can, I think, be attained better by the men being set free from the trammel of 'the touch.' To avail fully of such cover as might offer and still keep 'the touch' would be impossible, and I believe a man would fire with better effect if set free from it. Thus reasoning I was forced to the conclusion at which you, sir, have also arrived, "that we must fight our future battles in extended order."

The best mode of supporting the line actually engaged could, I think, be easily arranged; but in the face of a fire, which Colonel Macdonald has happily described as a "continuous volley," cover for such supports must be of primary importance.

I confess, sir, I desire to speak with the greatest diffidence on this subject. I feel that with so little experience of the effects of such a fire in battle, we can only grope after some system more likely to save annihilation than that now in use. Our principle of fighting in line often more than compensated for inferior numbers; and our adopting the single rank in action would still more increase this power and enable a commander to carry out a more skilful plan of operations than he could do otherwise.

As to preserving the length of front, that it appears to me could be more easily done in extended order than under the present system of preserving 'the touch.' As men fall under fire, files must now close and the length of front be diminished in propor-

tion; whereas no such closing would take place when they were extended, and the line would be strengthened when necessary as we now reinforce skirmishers.

I freely admit the correctness of many of Colonel Macdonald's observations on my last letter. To form line for action to the "reverse flank" when moving in fours by the words, "rear turn" involving a temporary change in the supernumerary rank, would, as he says, be "irregular," because it is not laid down in the "Field Exercise;" and, although in the habit of practicing this mode in meeting such an attack on my own parade, an "as far bar" as 1861 trained my corps to be as ready to the rear as to the front, yet I could not venture to do so at my official inspection, without subjecting myself to just animadversion—and as I consider it most essential that a regiment of infantry should be able to bring their battery of rifles into operation in every direction as rapidly as a battery of field artillery their guns, I quite concur with Colonel Macdonald in thinking that the sooner some mode of doing this is sanctioned by the proper authority the better, I begin to think that that gentleman and myself differ little in essentials. I make no distinction in ranks, and would use the one as freely as the other, moving the supernumerary rank as occasion required.

But as we are agreed that in future we must fight in single rank, the question of "front rank" and "rear rank" loses much of its importance. What now concerns us most of all is that some new system should be devised suitable to the great and vital changes which have taken place both in the arms in the hands of the soldier and in field artillery; and I cannot but indulge the hope that before long we shall see a committee appointed to go thoroughly into the subject, with a view to construct such a system of field movements, both battalion and brigade, as would best meet the emergency.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
J. H. MACDONALD.

December 17, 1868.

16TH BATTALION.

The 16th Battalion, of Prince Edward, has been re-enrolled under the new Militia Act, the following companies having sent in the service rolls prior to 1st inst.

No. 1	Capt A. J. Wright,	Picton,
" 3	" Wm. Patterson,	Wellington,
" 4	" A.R. McDonald,	Consecon,
" 5	" J.C. Lake,	Milford,
" 6	" J. Clapp,	Milford,
" 7	" F. White,	Picton,
" 8	" N.A. Peterson,	Roblin's Mills
" 9	" Wm. Anderson,	Rednersville.

We regret that one of the Picton Companies failed to reorganize (No. 2). We think a little exertion on the part of the Officers would have placed the company again in the Battalion.—*New Nation*.

Gen. Prim dressed up his boy as a sub-lieutenant of chasseurs, mounted him on a pony, which once belonged to the Prince of the Asturias, and had the youth by his side during a review at Madrid.

COMMENDABLE.—We are pleased to learn that Capt. Vars, No. 7 Co., Colborne, has sent in his muster roll, according to the requirements of the New Militia Act, the re-enrollment footing up the very full number of 55 men.—*Colborne Express*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LIEUT.-COLONEL DENISON AND THE "LONDON REVIEW."

To the Editor of THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

DEAR SIR:—A hundred years ago the great British vice of superciliousness was doing far more than all the ostensible causes of revolt to alienate from the mother country, those colonies which have since become one of the greatest of nations. To this vice, is chiefly owing the fact that that nation is at the present day deeply hostile at heart to England, and to everything English. In view of such results a milder term than vice would be misapplied.

We have for some years past fondly hugged the belief that this odious snobbery had died out amidst the general advance of knowledge and liberality of sentiment. We awake from a dream which we find to have been a Utopian vision, to a reality which covers us with shame and sorrow. It is particularly painful to an Englishman to be driven to confess that this detestable foible is so inherent in his nation, that it still bids defiance to the teachings of history, and the maxims of Christianity; and that where the instinctive feelings of the gentleman are wanting, the acquired principles of a gentlemanly position, and a gentlemanly profession are insufficient to curb its exercise.

In the face of recent escapades of gentlemen bearing the Queen's Commission, we cannot blind ourselves to the humiliating fact that the spirit which disgraced the British Army in the days of Braddock, is, unhappily, not yet totally extinct, and the shallow insolence of the "London Review" affords as evidence only too plain that the exercise of that profession in which, of all others, we look for candour and moderation, is powerless to restrain the outbursts of a vulgar, ignorant, and conventional vanity.

I propose to justify each of these terms.

Vulgarity—because the force of snobbishness could scarcely go further than to take as the grounds of an adverse criticism, the facts that a gentleman is a Volunteer and a Colonist.

Ignorance, because Colonel Denison's critic is, in the first place, incapable of estimating that officer's ability and claim to attention, and in the second place is doubtless unaware that he has been spoken of by a distinguished Cavalry Officer, as "A fellow to whom we can teach nothing, as he already 'knows more than most of us.'"

Conventionalism, because the strictures of the *London Review*, are in accordance with the peculiar opinions of a clique—a clique unfortunately numerous and influential enough to do much mischief, and which has consequently earned a heartfelt and liberal tribute of disgust and contempt from a class of Englishmen which superadds to its knowledge of English Society a large Colonial experience.

Just before sitting down to write a few