

Having noticed certain grievances of the army Secretary Proctor remarks:—"The distance between the highest grade of non-commissioned officer and the commissioned officer is great, far too great in my judgment. It would be wisdom to decrease that distance. In so far as the question is an administrative one, the department must continue to meet it experimentally, correcting abuses where found to exist, and instituting innovations if necessary. It is but just for me to say that the commissioned officers are in earnest in their desire to correct this evil, and are giving to its solution their hearty efforts. To a considerable extent, however, the remedies lie with Congress; and I submit the following recommendations:

"(1). Make the pay of non-commissioned officers, of infantry cavalry, and artillery, the same as now established by law for like grades in the engineers. More bright and ambitious young men might be thus induced to enter the service.

"(2). Give the soldier an opportunity to so improve himself that when he leaves the service he may be better fitted for civil life than when he entered it. Post schools should be established where not only instruction by lessons and lectures should be given in matters pertaining to military service, but also in the elementary branches of mathematics, science, mechanics, surveying, engineering, drawing, etc. All officers are qualified to supervise or do this work. It would have no tendency to relax discipline, but would establish a new relation between the company officers, especially the subalterns, and enlisted men, that would be beneficial to both, and help to remedy some of the evils of the present military administration. Something has already been done in this direction, and several schools have been established.

"(3). Authorize re-enlistments for one or more years at posts where a soldier is discharged. A man will sometimes re-enlist for a short time when he will not for the full term. If the Government is not subjected to the cost of transportation and instruction, the great objection to short terms of service is removed. Men re-enlisted for a short term would not desert.

"(4). Make a code of punishment suited to times of peace, which is less arbitrary but more certain. The variableness of courts-martial and the great disparity of punishments prevailing in the different military departments, destroy one of the most essential elements in the proper administration of any code of law, and its fickleness and instability are well calculated to and do invite petitions for clemency. I recommend the revision of the Articles of War; and that provisions be made for the punishment of certain minor offences, under well defined restrictions, without the intervention of a court-martial, and oftentimes long precedent confinement in a guardhouse.

"Other points which are strongly recommended by many prominent officers, and have much to commend them, are: Authorize enlistments for three years only, give the soldier in time of peace the privilege of purchasing his discharge under well-defined regulations, and retain some part of the soldier's pay, which he forfeits by desertion. The attention of Congress is invited to the recommendations of the Acting Judge-Advocate-General for permitting and directing the arrest of deserters by civil officers and otherwise rendering their capture more certain and speedy."

Arrangements are being made to organize a second mounted infantry regiment in the British Army.

A Berlin correspondent writes that Bismarck looks with foreboding upon his death as the probable signal for preparations for war. A young Emperor, says the writer, who thinks of nothing but machine guns and smokeless powder, is on the throne. The jingle of spurs and the rattle of musketry are in this young man's ears all day long and echo in his dreams at night. He cultivates the habit of shortened hours of sleep in imitation of Frederick the Great, and in his bluff camaraderie with his soldiers, his efforts at philosophical epigrams with the peasantry, and his attitudes toward his courtiers he shows at every step how bitten through and through he is with the idea of modelling himself upon that founder of Prussia's power.

There are few names better known in the British Navy than Admiral Colomb's. The greatest authority on marine signalling in the world, the inventor of a code of night signals worked on the Moore alphabet system of signs, which is now used in all the navies of the world, and the inventor of the peculiar lamps used in the interior of all war ships, he willingly sacrificed the prospects of a brilliant naval career to gain the time for working out his signal system. Yet he has never benefited in the least by his labours, and, although advanced in honorary retired rank, still draws only that pecuniary allowance which was his by right at the time of retirement. Several service members of the House of Commons have determined to urge upon the Government that some special reward is due to an officer who has done such good work, and it is generally hoped that the appeal will be met in no ungrudging spirit.

Sights and Laying.

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Every officer both of Infantry, Artillery and Cavalry, must often have experienced the great difficulty of teaching men to lay the gun or aim the rifle with the same amount of foresight. We are all of us familiar with "full-sights," "half sights" and "fine-sights," and, if left to himself, every Tommy Atkins would have his own theory and his own sight. And this tendency has done more to vitiate results than almost any other error. Even after a definite elevation has been given by the officer, he can never feel sure that the man directing either the gun or the rifle has not entirely altered it by his method of looking over the sights, and has not thus introduced a fresh variable element which should not have existed at all. Thanks, however, to the ingenuity of Major G. A. Lewes of the Northamptonshire Regiment, we are for the future to be able to reduce the chances of such mistakes to a minimum, and there is no longer to be any ambiguity as to the nature of the sight. There is only to be one sight with the new rifle, and that is to be the correct one; and moreover, the one which it will require something like wilful carelessness not to adopt. The Government have, we are glad to say, willingly accepted the new method, and the latest pattern magazines are all fitted with it. In the system of which we speak the foresight consists of a rectangular block of metal, which, in place of being brought to a point or edge, is split down the middle. This aperture is not intended to be looked through, but the line formed by the light through it; is more clearly defined, and less liable to injury than if it were formed of any white metal or enamel. The metal round the split being particularly strong, there is no danger of its shape being altered by the fixing or unfixing of bayonets, or by any rough usage. This block is sufficiently high to enable the bayonet to be fixed without the accuracy of the aim being interfered with. The back-sight, which is to be used in combination with it, is formed of a hinged flap and sliding bar. This bar has the upper edge bevelled and a square notch cut in the middle, from the centre of which there runs vertically downwards a fine white line. The notch is constructed of such a size that, when accurate aim is taken, the block on the muzzle which forms the foresight exactly fills it. When this is the case, it follows that the split we have alluded to forms a continuous white line with the line at the bottom of the notch. The man who is aiming the rifle has, therefore, only to look over a single point, namely, the top of the line which the two sights form. He has not to bring two points in line with the object, for, when the aim is good, the fore-sight and back-sight present only the appearance of a single sight to the eye behind them. The sights are so arranged that, when the flap is lying flat and the bar is down, they are correct for 200 yards, or, in other words, that the rifle shoots point blank at that distance. With a low trajectory a man would not be safe from fire thus delivered anywhere within 300 yards of the marksman. It will be much more difficult to make an error as regards elevation with this sight than with our present one, because, if the aim is good, the block of the foresight will either appear as a black mass *above* the general line of the bar, or there will be a *gap* in the edge presented to the eye. The former effect will be particularly noticeable, and therefore the tendency to fire high—which is the most common failing—will be obviated more especially. As a general rule the object to be fired at would be a wide one, such as a line or mass of men, and therefore it is very important that in volley firing the elevation, at any rate, should be correct and uniform. However great the excitement, every man should be able to see that his block fore-sight comes in line with the edge of the bar, while, if he can see nothing but a black mass through the notch, he knows his direction must be approximately right. It should be easier to keep to the same elevation, and in volley firing that will be a great matter, even if each rifle be not accurately aligned on any point or individual in the opposing force. The element of uncertainty which varying light causes in all shooting should likewise be reduced to a minimum, for the amount of foresight seen will be always the same. The construction of the foresight will also protect it from injury. The slit has a large mass of metal on each side to preserve it, and there is no edge or point to be broken, or knocked, or blunted. Furthermore, in firing at long ranges, all intervening ground will be hidden from the marksman's eye, and there will be less liability of his attention being diverted from the object. It is impossible in a short article to do full justice to this admirable invention, which is as simple as it is efficient, and as accurate as it is serviceable; but we think we have said enough to show how valuable is the service which Major Lewes has done in bringing it forward, and how thoroughly it is adapted to meet the requirements of the soldier. It is not, we believe, an exaggeration to say that, fitted with these sights, our new arm will be equal to the delicately-sighted match rifle, while, as regards strength and durability, it will be far superior to that which is at present in the hands of our men.

Higher praise than this it is impossible to give. If it were not so we should willingly give it.