

KRIEGSPIEL IN ENGLAND.

(BY A MILITARY CORRESPONDENT.)

The "Kriegspiel," or "War Game," has now become so firmly established in England, and so popular with a large class of our officers, that some account of the game will be useful to the non-professional reader, who must often be perplexed by the announcement figuring in all solemnity in general orders or in the military intelligence that "a war game will be played" at a certain time and place. Though long known in Germany and encouraged by Von Moltke and other eminent officers, who appreciated its value as a means of instruction, the War Game was not introduced into England until two years ago, when the first set was brought over by General Eyre. Since then, however, it has made rapid progress. A central society has been formed in London which holds weekly evening meetings at the War Office. Other societies have been instituted by the Guards in London, the Artillery at Woolwich, the Engineers at Chatham and in the large garrisons of Aldershot, Portsmouth, Plymouth, &c. At all these places meetings are periodically held, at which the game is played, and always watched with the deepest interest by a crowd of spectators; for it is a game in which the spectator may learn almost as much as the player. The implements are maps, answering to the chess board, and small metal blocks representing troops. The maps used are on a scale of six inches to the mile, accurate surveys of parts of England being specially prepared for the purpose. The undulations of ground are shown by hill shading, the relative heights by contour lines; hedgerows, woods, &c., are all marked; the nature of the ground, the character of the wood, the quality of roads being indicated by conventional tints. These maps are mounted on stout cardboard, and cut in squares; any required number of these can be joined to obtain the tract of country which is to be the scene of the proposed operations, and as the game progresses those parts which are no longer used can be removed. At the opening of the play the two parties generally start ten miles or more apart, and from five to ten feet of map are consequently required; but as the game continues, and the supposed armies come in contact, the operations become confined to a much smaller space. The "men" are small flat blocks of metal about one-eighth of an inch thick, shaped and coloured to represent the several units of an army in their various formations. Then there are long thin blocks to represent a battalion in line, short square ones for a battalion in column, others to indicate a battery of artillery, a squadron of cavalry, a company extended in skirmishing order, &c. These are made to scale, so that they occupy the space on the map which the troops they represent would actually cover on the ground. A box contains two sets, one red and the other blue to distinguish the sides, each set having sufficient pieces to represent a complete army corps.

"Kriegspiel" is carried on by "moves," each move on the board representing the space which could be traversed by troops in two minutes. The length of the move, therefore, varies according to the nature of the troops and the rate of movement. Thus infantry, at an ordinary walk, do two hundred yards or about half an inch on the map while cavalry trotting do six hundred paces, or about an inch and a half. Scales are pro-

vided on which are shown the distances traversed by the several arms at the different rates of movement, and by means of these the moves are at once measured off on the map. But the move is not necessarily expended in shifting the pieces; it includes anything in reality which the player could do with his troops in two minutes. He may move every piece the full distance; for instance, if the blocks are placed to represent a column of troops marching along a road the whole column is pushed on. Or he may move a few only, or none, as would be the case if his troops were already supposed to be in position awaiting the enemy. Or he may spend it firing on the enemy, in which event the losses inflicted by two minutes of fire are calculated; or he may occupy a part of his force in strengthening his position, in which case this is noticed by the umpire, and he receives the benefit of it should his position be afterwards attacked. To economize time, it is usual when the two sides are at some distance apart, to allow several moves to be taken together; thus the umpire may give thirty moves, the pieces being thus at once moved the distance they would have traversed in an hour. A careful record is kept of the number of moves made, these being executed by the two parties simultaneously.

Engaged in the game are the players and the umpires. The number of players varies according to the number of forces supposed to be employed. Where these are small, one on a side is sufficient; but with larger forces, two, three, or even more, are required. In this case, the principal player acts as commander in chief, and a separate role is assigned to each of the others—such as commander of the cavalry, commander of the advanced guard, or of any detached body having a certain independence of action. The players have to draw out the orders for the supposed operations, and during the game, they state what moves they wish to make; but they are never allowed actually to touch the pieces—the distances are measured and the pieces moved by the umpires. There are generally three umpires—a chief and two assistants. The assistants are told off one to each side; they measure and make the moves, determine minor questions as to the rate of advance under various circumstances, cover afforded by woods or undulations of ground, &c., and calculate the losses suffered by fire. The chief umpire draws up the "idea" which is to form the subject of the contest, determines the number of moves, allowed at one time, decides all important questions, interferes if he thinks it necessary, supervises the encounter generally, and at its close, often gives a short criticism upon it. The progress and details of the game are best explained by describing one as it is actually played.

Some days beforehand the chief umpire gives out the "general" and "special ideas" which are to form the basis of the game. The "general idea" contains those broad facts which would be known to both sides—for instance, that an invader has effected a landing and is moving on London by certain roads, and that the defending army is concentrating to oppose him. This is communicated to both parties. The "special idea" contains those facts which would be known to one side only. Thus, the "special idea" for the invaders might be that a force of a given strength is detached to try and secure an important railway junction; while that for the defenders may be that a force is sent to hold the junction if possible, and, if overpowered, destroy it and fall back. The

"special ideas" are only communicated to the side concerned. Each "special idea" contains a detailed statement of the numbers engaged, explains the nature and object of the proposed operation, and gives any information as to position and movements of adjoining bodies that would affect the plans of the commander. Further, at the discretion of the umpire it may give such information about the enemy as might be gained by spies or patrols; thus, the special idea for the defender might state that the detachment is made in consequence of information received that a body of the enemy, strong in infantry, but weak in cavalry and artillery, was seen moving in the direction of the point named. Having received the general idea and their respective special ideas, the players proceed to study the map and draw up the orders. And here the instruction commences before the play begins. The players find themselves in presence of military problems such as would constantly arise in war, but which are seldom thought out in peace. They have the same data, the map, the accurate knowledge of their strength and position, and a vague idea of those of the adversary, which they would have on service, and they have to frame their plans and issue their orders accordingly. These orders are drawn up concisely and clearly, as they would have to be in the field, and sent to the umpire a day or two before the game.

On the day appointed the players meet in a large room in which the necessary maps have been laid out. Sometimes the game is played on two sets of maps, each side having their own; sometimes, on one, the players being separated by a screen across the map; the object in each case being to prevent their seeing the enemy's position and movements. The assistant umpires give out to each party blocks representing the number of battalions, batteries, and squadrons they have at their disposal, and the players distribute them as the troops would actually be placed either in camp before starting, or in column of march along the road, as the umpire may direct. In the latter case, the umpire ascertainment that their position and formation agree with the orders previously drawn up and in his hands. The position of the general and of any subordinate commanders is shown. The hour at which the operations commence is noted, and a record being kept of the moves, the supposed time of the day is always known. At first, probably, the main bodies are moving in columns of march at the usual rate along the road, which patrols of cavalry, represented by very small pieces, are being pushed forward by longer moves to look for the enemy—neither party at present seeing any of its adversaries' pieces. After a few moves these patrols come so near that they would see one another, or reach commanding ground from which they would overlook the country and see the enemy's columns. Everything that would really be seen by these patrols, is now shown to the players, either by placing corresponding pieces of the adversary if playing on separate maps, or by partly lifting the screen if playing on one only. The information so obtained may lead the player to alter his plans materially. But he cannot do so at once. The knowledge has only reached his cavalry patrols, and before he can act on it time must be allowed for the news to reach the point where the commander is shown, and further for his orders to be transmitted to the troops, the time being calculated by the number of "moves" required for a mounted orderly to traverse the distance. This rule is most strictly adhered