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THE AUTUMN MANŒUVRES OF 1898.

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Thursday, February 23rd, 1899.

Major-General J. B. STERLING in the Chair.

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

BEFORE speaking on the interesting matter in hand, I crave permission to address a few remarks of a personal nature. First, then, I would express my very real regret that it should be your lot this afternoon to listen to words of mine, instead of my being able to sit amongst you and listen to some one more competent to deal with so important a subject. I cannot help thinking of one in particular from whom we should all have learned much, but who, alas, is prevented by a great sorrow from being with us to-day. His influence is, none the less, very strongly upon many of us, and if I, happily, am able to put before you certain matters worthy of anxious and serious thought, it is his influence which has taught me to think. You have my sympathy; I ask you, therefore, to grant me yours, and also your indulgence. Many difficulties crossed my mind when first the subject was suggested to me, but the distance of time, I think, made me bold. For since I rashly consented to read this paper I have known but little peace of mind. Ever before me in the rushing interval of time, and in a very busy life, have I seen the Spectre of this Manœuvre Paper drawing closer and closer. I never fully realised, however, my own hardihood until I met one day a member of the Council of this Institution, to whom I spoke on the subject. As my courage had not then entirely evaporated, my reference thereto was fairly light and airy. But his reply crushed me:—"Yes, we were talking of you in the matter, but I said that I knew you would not be fool enough to do it." I left him as quickly as I could, consistent with politeness, fully realising the aptness of the trite saying regarding a certain section of blundering humanity who thoughtlessly rush in where even a body of celestial beings fear to tread.

Some of you may have come to-day in the expectation of hearing a scathing criticism of last year's manœuvres. To such my paper will be a severe disappointment. According to my experience, there was much to praise, but little to blame. Even if I considered myself a competent critic—which I do not—I am of opinion that it would be more patriotic to gloss over trivial mistakes, easily remedied in the light of experience gained, rather than to call exaggerated attention to them with the idea, perhaps, of impressing the world in general with a sense of one's own importance and one's own omniscience. Much of the cheap criticism which I have since read in a certain section of the Press is, according to my own observation, sheer nonsense and unprofessional twaddle. I made it my business to see all that I could, and I had a free hand. I met and conversed with all sorts and conditions of men, from the highest to the lowest. I endeavoured to get at the real feeling of the rank and file whenever occasion offered itself. I interviewed civilian members of the supply and transport sections in the dead of night, when broken down by the wayside on account of overloading and under-horsing; and this I can honestly say, that in my judgment every officer and soldier in Her Majesty's Forces, and often under most trying circumstances, endeavoured to the best of his ability to do his duty, and generally succeeded, whilst the civilian element attached had also the best intentions as a rule, but unfortunately, owing to want of proper organisation, too often did not know how to carry them out.

The foregoing remarks were penned before the appearance of the Official Report—penned, moreover, to excuse my own poor attempts to piece together the story of the manœuvres. Just at that time some of the papers were clamouring for such Report, but time continued to run on without its appearance. Of course there must be all sorts of failures and shortcomings to be concealed, said the wise ones. Therefore I worked away at papers, and returns, and figures, until I was weary of the sight of them. And suddenly I found myself confronted towards the end of last month with the delightfully clear and outspoken, as well as comprehensive, Report of the Commander-in-Chief, the director of the manœuvres. Naturally I found my own efforts often wide of the mark. Two and two with me had sometimes made five, sometimes three, and haply on occasions exactly four. I quickly realised, therefore, that my own laboured efforts might just as well be committed to a capacious and hospitable waste-paper basket. I also realised that having undertaken to talk to you this afternoon, unless I chose to give you a *résumé* of the Official Report, I must more than ever rely on my personal observations. But to understand properly the manœuvres, I advise those who have not already done so, to study carefully the Official Report thereon. My particular task was to record the daily doings of the Northern or "Red" Army under the command of H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught. Therefore, for the time, I was a partisan. Everything to me was *couleur de rose*, or if you prefer it, *couleur de rouge*. Everything "Blue" was bitterly hostile, bent only on the capture of our beloved capital. Day by day I saw the "enemy" at a greater or less distance; but so far did my

prejudice extend, that I preferred not even to know the task set for their commander. In this way was I better able to judge of the difficulties of our own.

II.—PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS.

It will be remembered that under date of 6th August, 1897, there appeared some four-and-a-half modest pages of new legislation, bearing the full title of "60 & 61 Vict., chapter 43, An Act to facilitate Military Manœuvres." As I shall have more to say about the Act itself presently, I would only here call attention to the clearly expressed purpose of such Act, viz., "*to facilitate Military Manœuvres.*"

Under Sec. 4, then, of this Act, by an Order in Council, dated 19th May, 1898, the Military Manœuvres Commission was appointed, and duly held its first meeting on 7th June of last year. The Act was to come into force on the 15th August, and there was much hard work to be got through by the Commission in the interval. That the work was got through reflects the greatest credit on that body, but it is only fair to the local civil authorities to add that their liberal appreciation of the spirit of the Act—and not its mere letter—materially contributed to its successful working. As regards the military preparations, the Commander-in-Chief, in his Report, directs special attention to the consequences of such a late date being fixed for the application of the Act, notably in the matter of hiring land for camping purposes. He suggests that "in future at least two months should be allowed for preliminary work."

The initial difficulty must have been with us whence to get the number of men decided upon, how to house them, how to feed and water them, and how to move their various requirements. As regards the former difficulty, the United Kingdom was called upon to furnish troops throughout its length and breadth. The Militia also was afforded the opportunity of showing its worth—or otherwise. The Army Ordnance Corps faced the matter of "Equipment" with apparent confidence and certainly with success. To the Royal Engineers fell one exceptionally great difficulty, that of water supply. This was, however, as was indeed all their work, most admirably provided for and carried through under the circumstances, and it is gratifying to find that the Official Report recognises fully the good work done. Early in April last a systematic reconnaissance of possible camping grounds had been made by officers then studying at the Staff College, which, whilst affording excellent practice and instruction to the officers concerned, enabled the authorities to fix upon certain definite *rayons*. The water difficulty was quickly found to be the governing condition, and the reality of the operations was continually hampered by this consideration. How this difficulty may be overcome in the future remains to be determined, and is worthy of earnest discussion. That hard-working and efficient branch, the Army Service Corps, had neither the *personnel* nor the *matériel* with which to carry out their particular duties, and so the bold experiment of relying mainly on civilian contractors was accordingly and perforce decided upon. Of all the many

valuable lessons to be gained from the manœuvres of 1898, surely this, from a national point of view, is the most important. Again our military chief has summed up the matter in a few pithy words. Under the head of "Transport" he writes:—"An increase to the number of men in these cadres" (Army Service Corps) "is, in my opinion, imperative." Again, under the head of "Supply," after giving the credit due to the Corps for the admirable manner in which their duties had been performed, under exceptionally difficult circumstances, he concludes:—"Without any doubt their peace establishment is very far below its legitimate requirements. I am strongly of opinion that a considerable increase, while still fulfilling the condition of economical use in peace, is absolutely essential to efficient expansion for war." Fortunately these weighty words have now been laid before Parliament by command of Her Majesty, and I have preferred to quote them here rather than inflict on you what I had already written in the same strain myself prior to seeing them. It is devoutly to be hoped that our legislators will see the falseness and criminality of any cheese-paring economy in this all-important matter.

III.—NATURE OF MANŒUVRE COUNTRY.

The area selected for the larger operations presents many features of interest, and lends itself to tactical combinations to a degree not often met with in this country. From the point of view, therefore, of home defence, pure and simple, it may not be the best possible training ground for our troops, although as regards practice in Continental campaigning nothing better could be wished for. The difficulty of command and supervision in our ordinary close or intersected country is well known to the thoughtful few, and it would be excellent practice for our troops to manœuvre in large bodies in such country from time to time. The training may otherwise prove misleading. To us, spectators, however, such ground as that about Salisbury Plain is, generally speaking, ideal. The bare rolling chalk downs, with uninterrupted view and freedom of movement, present the opportunity of watching combined tactics on a large scale such as could never be hoped for in the ordinary English country, broken up by hedges and blinded by woods. Here in Wiltshire only the valleys are enclosed as a rule, and winding amongst these valleys run a succession of streams affording valuable tactical features. The intervening high ground generally consists of broad plateaus with slightly curved crest, falling away towards the main valleys in a succession of spurs and intervening water-courses. These minor features, whilst easily overlooked from the commanding heights, afforded many an object-lesson as to the value of ground to those troops whose fortune it was to have to work over them. On more than one occasion it looked to us that the issue of the day's fight depended on the appreciation of these smaller folds, as lending themselves to a flanking, or at least enveloping, movement on the part of one commander or the other. Moreover, here were many occasions on which the action of subordinate leaders might well have exercised a most important and instructive effect on the day's operations

as a whole. It was, therefore, often a matter for regret that other considerations necessitated the sounding of the "Cease fire" at quite an early stage of the fight. This must have been especially the case with the Directing Staff, who know from experience the effect which local, and sometimes even apparently unimportant, successes may have on the general result. Taken as a whole, therefore, the lessons gained in Minor Tactics, and the handling of the comparatively smaller units, was disappointing, whereas had time permitted, these minor features of ground might well have afforded many opportunities for the exercise of judgment and self-reliance on the part of subordinates. If only the commanders on each side could have been freed from the ever-haunting fixed camping ground for the night, the day's operations would certainly have been more interesting sometimes to us lookers-on, and, I venture to think, more instructive to those engaged in them.

IV—COMPOSITION AND ORGANISATION OF OPPOSING ARMIES.

The composition and organisation of the two armies present many points of interest, the more so, perhaps, from the fact that the latter did not conform, except in the broadest manner, to the existing war establishments. Roughly speaking, there were two opposing army corps, with a cavalry brigade added in each case. With the exception of the Regular battalions forming the four brigades of the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Northern Army—which battalions had been accustomed to work together at Aldershot under the same chief—all the troops had been shovelled together and collected in heaps from various parts of the kingdom. Their commanders, moreover, were strange to them, their respective staffs were also strange to them and strange to their leaders. As this is just what would occur on mobilisation, for home defence at least, the experiment had its value, but to the best of troops it would always prove a severe test. As my own experience lay wholly with the Northern Army I can speak only of them, but of them I can safely say that the difference between the divisions from Aldershot and that which was pieced together in the way I have mentioned above was at first very marked. The more credit, then, to these other hastily collected units that they settled down into their places so rapidly and so effectively. I am only able to judge of the Southern Army from the way in which they went by the saluting point on the last day on Boscombe Down, but, to judge from that performance, their time together had certainly not been wasted. The organisation of the brigades was further complicated by the addition of two Militia battalions in each case. These were of a strength of six companies, whereas the Regulars mustered but four. I will not for a moment admit that I consider the addition of these Militia units a drawback in any way; but as regards the Aldershot troops, at least, it certainly tended to destroy their homogeneous character at the start. Speaking as a Militiaman of some years' service, I am proud to think that our Force will always be found of value in the service of our country; and with a reasonable time to enable us to get into shape, I firmly

believe that such Force will do credit to itself and be no discredit to the Regular battalions with which it is now so closely connected. In this connection it is pleasant to note the arrangement by which the Militia units served in the same brigades as their Regular battalions, and I trust that one, out of the many, good results of the manœuvres may be that some of these sister battalions may have learnt to know each other better, and to appreciate each other accordingly. Of the artillery units much the same may be said, as regards the brigade divisions coming solid from Aldershot and those built up from other quarters. I have no desire to take part in a controversy which appeared recently in one of the Service journals, the more especially as I have already owned that I was partisan throughout; but as far as my observation enabled me to judge, it seemed that our guns quite overpowered and out-manœuvred those of the enemy, owing either to better handling or more thorough co-operation. Of the cavalry I mean to say practically nothing this afternoon, since I read that an officer of that arm will address an audience here shortly as to their doings at the manœuvres. Having studied with some care the writings of that officer on certain professional matters, I feel convinced that he will read you a valuable paper, and it would be highly presumptuous of me to poach on his preserves. I should like, however, to say that I am a firm believer in the value of cavalry not only before the battle but during the battle itself, and possibly most of all when the battle is over, whether it be lost or whether it be won. To my mind the day of the "white arm" is not past; and as we English can if we choose have the best cavalry in the world, we ought to have it. Of the other corps and departments the record is in many instances painful, since they were but skeletons at best. The old naval maxim here with reference to the ship and one half-pennyworth of tar seems to me strangely applicable. Our rank and file will fight in the future as they have fought before; our officers and non-commissioned officers will lead them as of old; but it has been so often in the departmental units that we have fallen short, with consequent delay and vastly increased expenditure. Is it not therefore wiser, whilst we are spending, to spend yet a little more and do the thing thoroughly—and if needs be, find out an additional weakness? It would seem more satisfactory to work if necessary with smaller forces, but to have those forces complete for war in all respects: I venture to submit that in certain branches in September last the provision for the chapter of accidents approached very closely the limit of breaking strain. This again seems to me false economy, and calculated to imperil success as well as to take away from the reality of the training.

V.—THE RESPECTIVE COMMANDERS.

It would be highly improper for me to attempt to criticise the respective commanders of the Home and Invading Forces, but I think it may be of interest to remind you of certain points in connection with them. The Defending Army was, as it should be, under the command of

the soldier son of our Gracious Sovereign—General H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught. Throughout his professional career this officer has been known as an earnest, painstaking student of the art of war, and I submit that the manœuvres of last September have served to show that such study has borne good fruit. A careful perusal, moreover, of the thoughtful Report furnished by H.R.H. on their conclusion will confirm such opinion. As regards other leaders of the Northern Army, I must confess to a feeling of amusement when I remember a favourite query shortly before the operations commenced. It may fairly be assumed that the private soldier, in the sanctity of his barrack-room, criticises somewhat freely his regimental officers—and, I fancy, generally comes pretty near the mark in such criticism. Similarly the regimental officer, in the sanctity of his own mess, sometimes criticises, somewhat freely too, those superior beings in “brass hats” whose duty it is to order us about at field days and manœuvres, and at whose dreaded approach we—some of us—literally quake in our shoes. The query then—awful though it sounds, and reluctant as I am to repeat it—was, “Where are the brains of the Northern Army?” Picture to yourself my horror at such a question, since it was my duty to observe the doings of that army from day to day. At once I realised what was going to happen—worsted in each fight, out-generalled and out-manœuvred, the defenders of our hearths and homes were about to suffer severe punishment and ignominious defeat. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have warned you that I was a partisan throughout, but I reply to that obnoxious query that the brains of the Northern Army were somewhere at all events, with the result that in the daily conflicts it invariably held its own at least against the invaders, and that on the last day of fighting it was not our army which suffered any defeat.

It seemed to have been forgotten that the Northern commander, moreover, had already had more experience in the handling of large forces, owing to his Indian experience, than had any other commander. And it struck me very quickly that amongst the *Head Quarters Staff* of our Force there was a refreshing absence of fuss or worry which augured well for success. I must not be taken to infer from this statement that these undesirable accompaniments were present in the case of our foes, for it was never my fortune to see them except from a reasonably safe distance. It was also a real pleasure to observe that the writer of the best-known and most widely-read work on Tactics—indeed, the pioneer of the present mass of literature on that subject—proved himself to be, if proof were needed, equally able to handle living bodies of men. In our own Service it has been shown often enough that the man of the sword may equally be a man of the pen, and several instances will occur to you at the very summit of the military ladder. Opposed to us, moreover, were two noted wielders of that weapon which our copybooks used to tell us is mightier even than the sword.

As regards the Southern Army, we knew, therefore, that there were plenty of brains, and we knew, moreover, that its commander, General Sir Redvers Buller, is a thoroughly practical soldier and a born leader of men. If it were my own good fortune to go on service to-morrow,

I know that under no one should I be more anxious to serve than under the "Blue" commander, much as I hated him for the first seven days of September last. I have an idea that this distinguished officer—who will, I trust, if he reads this paper, forgive my frank expression of temporary hatred—was not much enamoured of the "imaginary" portions of the schemes with which he had to deal, and certainly on the last day of the operations it seemed as though he had taken the information regarding the safety of his left to mean rather more than was intended to be conveyed by the framers of the scheme. It does not ever do—on service or otherwise—to credit all the rumours which are current in camp; but some inventive genius set it about that if the "Blue" commander heard very much more about the "imaginary" force, which had, in theory, effected a landing in the neighbourhood of Bristol, he intended to march his army to join it, and leave us "Reds" near Salisbury to play by ourselves. Of course this cannot really have been said, but it amused us—and hurt no one. Anyhow the very wise ones who thought that the Invading Army were going to "eat up" our Home Force, when and how they chose, turned out to be mistaken. In the result it was shown that there were plenty of brains in both armies, and plenty of will and energy to carry out the workings of such brains. The report of the Southern commander is also a valuable document, and well repays careful study. The further Report of the War Office Committee on the manœuvres, over which the "Red" commander presided, and on which the "Blue" commander sat as a member, has now also appeared to prove still more clearly how superfluous this paper of mine has become. Even a cursory reading of this latest Report shows clearly how many lessons of value have been deduced from the operations of September last.

VI.—THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ARMIES.

It will be remembered that the manœuvre operations, lasting continuously from 1st July to 8th September, were divided into three clearly defined periods. The cavalry exercises extended over eight weeks from the former date. The "drills" of the larger units of the other arms lasted from 15th to 31st August, whilst the manœuvres proper filled up the remaining eight days. The Aldershot troops carried out their drills at their own station, only one division, therefore, of the Northern Army having to assemble and put in theirs in the manœuvre area. The whole of the Southern Army being, so to speak, a scratch pack—without intending any disrespect by such term—assembled for their drills in the south-eastern extremity of the theatre of war, close to their theoretical place of landing. The troops of the Northern Army, other than those from Aldershot, had many of them long railway journeys, involving the passage of their trains over several systems, whilst those to form the Southern Force had in many cases a sea-voyage intervening as well. Since this is what must occur in many cases on mobilisation, the experience gained thereby, both by the railway staff as well as by the military authorities, must be recognised as of the greatest value. The railway companies evidently laid themselves out to do their part of the work thoroughly, and it must

not be forgotten that the ordinary traffic, so far from being suspended, was often exceptionally heavy, in the manœuvre region at all events, owing to the influx of visitors and the unusual journeyings of inhabitants. Amongst the many matters, therefore, for congratulation, not the least must be the proof of our railway capabilities. Various faults and oversights came to light in matters of detail, but by the noting of these we shall gain in the future. The strain on the responsible officials must at times have been very heavy; the staff was often sadly overworked; but, speaking from personal experience, it is pleasant to be able to record that not one single case of discourtesy, or want of consideration, was met with. Indeed, very much the reverse, when one might well have forgiven a possible brevity of manner. Certain units on their journeyings had uncomfortable waits sometimes, no doubt, but the majority of such sufferers appeared to realise that they were playing at war and must be content to take the rough with the smooth. To such as had not played the real game, it was moreover not a bad reminder that even in manœuvre warfare there will sometimes be a rough side. None the less should every effort be made by those responsible for the comfort of their men, that no unnecessary hardships should have to be suffered by them, owing to the lack of forethought and careful preparation.

VII.—TRANSPORT AND SUPPLY.

The total amount of transport used during the manœuvres consisted of 1,514 vehicles, 4,619 horses and mules, and 2,420 drivers. Of the former some two-thirds, of the two latter rather more than one-half, had to be hired from civilian sources. The experiment therefore was one of extreme interest when viewed in the light of the possibility of utilising the civilian element in time of national need, and particularly for home defence. The hired wagons were apportioned to units as regimental transport but remained in charge of the Army Service Corps companies, the weakness of whose cadres was such that the civilian increase practically swamped them. The more credit therefore is due to the military branch for the way in which they managed somehow to carry out the duties required of them. It is fortunately not the custom of our people to sit down and own themselves beat when confronted by a serious difficulty, and in no instance was this constant struggle with the apparently impossible more marked than in this connection. Here was, to my mind, the big failure of the manœuvres, but here also the lesson learned was of most value. To drive this lesson home, however, I must ask you to bear with me whilst I say yet more on the subject. I have already alluded incidentally to the overloading and under-horsing of the civilian branch. The weighty words of Field-Marshal the Commander-in-Chief on the occasion of the concluding conference of the campaign should be taken to heart by every tax-payer who contributes his quota to the national insurance, as far as land defence is concerned. I quote from recollection only, but his words sank deep, and here is the pith of what he said:—
“Much has been learned with regard to supply duties and organisation,

and especially as regards transport and supply.¹ It has been plainly shown that no amount of hard work, good-will, and disregard of expense can compensate for want of previous organisation." And you must remember that these are the words of a past master in organisation, whose many successful campaigns have been to a great extent dependent for their success on the care and forethought displayed in these particulars. Need I remind you of the great Duke of Wellington's constant anxiety and concern with regard to the same important services in the Peninsula? The successful general in war is—he who can not only handle his troops in the presence of the enemy, but can feed and clothe them and tend the sick throughout the operations, in order to obtain the full fighting power from them when the occasion arises. The critical foreigner is apt to chaff us as a nation on our requirements in the feeding line, when on the war-path; but I have yet to learn of the Army, which in the face of want of proper food, want of sufficient clothing, and want of proper medical arrangements, could prosecute a campaign for any length of time or bring it to a successful conclusion—unless, perchance, owing to the supineness or utter demoralisation of the foe. It is the quiet, unobtrusive working of the machinery *behind* the Army which more often than not ensures the victory of the troops actually facing the enemy, and although the part played by the former is not so showy and does not appeal in the same way to the unobservant or hasty critic, it is none the less important.

¹ In this connection my good friend, and kindly critic, Dr. T. Miller Maguire, has since pointed out to me how fully this statement of the Commander-in-Chief was borne out in the recent Tirah campaign. I therefore add a few extracts from Captain L. J. Shadwell's interesting work, "Lockhart's Advance through Tirah." After pointing out that some 13,370 camels and bullocks and 29,440 other pack animals were required for the Tirah Expedition alone, Captain Shadwell writes:—"Out of this large number only a comparatively small proportion were Government animals, the surplus required had to be bought or hired. . . . The transport animals, more particularly the ponies and donkeys with which some of the troops were provided, were absolutely unfit for the purpose in view." He then contrasts, very favourably to the latter, the arrangements in force amongst the Imperial Service troops, paid, equipped, and maintained by the loyal native princes of India. Most of these troops consist of cavalry and infantry, some princes in addition maintaining "sappers and miners," whilst the rulers of Jeypore and Gwalior each keep up "an admirably equipped transport train."

"These Jeypore and Gwalior transport trains, placed as they were entirely at the service of the Indian Government, were of the greatest possible assistance; and their animals showed a marked contrast to the ponies bought and hired just before the Tirah Expedition. Not only was much of the delay at the beginning of the campaign due (to use a very mild term) to the inferior transport, but a great many of the animals bought for the expedition, instead of being sent to Kohat ready equipped, were dispatched without pack-saddles, bridles, or any equipment at all."

And as regards other means of transport:—"All the Government wheeled transport, together with the Jeypore and Gwalior carts, worked admirably, and if only the *hired contractors'* carts and the 'maundagi' carts could have been dispensed with, the constant blocks, breakdowns, and delays on the road would have been almost entirely obviated."

Altogether a very valuable chapter is this one on "The Transport"—and from Real War.—J. M.-W.

To those who read between the lines of our recent doings in the Soudan, Cairo and London are just as important as the Atbara and Omdurman. The Commander-in-Chief went on to praise the Army Service Corps of the two armies, and in repeating such praise in his Report he urges the necessity of an increase in their numbers. False economy here would be simply suicidal, for it must be obvious that an Army, however well trained, however brave, and however well equipped in other respects, becomes but a helpless, inert mass of human beings if incapable of movement on account of lack of transport or lack of supplies. I trust, therefore, to see ere long a notable increase in the twin-corps, even though it may necessitate my putting my hand a little deeper in my pocket to satisfy our well-known annual correspondent "I.T." I have heard an interesting suggestion, from a practical soldier, as to the feasibility of forming a branch of the Army Service Corps in connection with the Militia, which I would much like to hear discussed. There would seem to be a number of men who at present join no portion of Her Majesty's forces—men, too, accustomed to deal with horses and vehicles for the best part of their lives. It need not in any case be a costly experiment. Time-expired cavalymen might serve to increase its numbers, and officers be transferred to it from the Regular corps. This would serve materially to relieve the pressure in case of mobilisation, for home defence in particular, although a special reserve might well be created with liability for foreign service, as in the case of the Infantry Militia.

As a summary of the result of the recent experiment in hastily organised civilian transport, I will only add a couple of paragraphs which appeared in an admirable—if somewhat pugnacious—little evening journal, and which, as far as my own experience goes, are perfectly true:—"There were want of system, want of order, want of discipline, and wagons overloaded, often over-crowded with the human element in addition, and as often under-horsed. It is positively a marvel that the contractors, in their ignorance, got through the task somehow, even as well as they did, and it speaks volumes for the discipline and good feeling of the British Army—as represented at the manœuvres—that the cases of grumbling and occasional irregularities were but few and far between."

VIII.—SCHEMES AND UMPIRING.

It is to be regretted that the Report does not contain a more detailed criticism of the tactical working of the schemes. Reference, however, is made to Lieut.-General Sir Henry Brackenbury's Report thereon, which it is to be hoped may be obtainable in due course. The schemes to me were of daily interest, and the general intelligence displayed in their execution formed a hopeful feature of the manœuvres. Much time and care must have been expended in framing them, when the difficulties are considered. The water and camping bogeys were ever-present realities, killing all freedom of idea, and hampering every move. Is there, then, no way of overcoming these difficulties in future years? I think that "yes." The "imaginary" element has been in some cases somewhat

roughly handled, but more often than not it seemed to me that the "imaginary" force not only increased the interest but also the reality of the situation. The special arrangements for umpiring were drawn up most carefully, and the introduction of Reporting Officers, on our side at least, worked well. Whenever I found myself in a tight corner where some interesting situation was in process of solution, I invariably found one of the Umpire Staff ready to give his decision. This same setting of schemes, and the subsequent umpiring, form no light tasks, involving as they do the exercise of considerable judgment. True that the fights were not developed as one could have wished, and that as a consequence the subordinate commanders as well as the rank and file missed the opportunity of many valuable lessons in Tactics. But our manœuvres were meant to be on a large scale, and I am convinced that the higher leaders of both armies must have profited much by the experience gained in the handling of the larger units; and surely such increased knowledge is well-nigh priceless.

As regards the "enemy," it appears that the umpiring did not by any means give entire satisfaction—to put it mildly—and their commander does not hesitate to say so in his powerful Report. And especially does he fall foul of his unfortunate Reporting Officers. According to Sir Redvers Buller, "The arrangements for the distribution and duties of the Umpire Staff were the most complete I have known, the result of their work was far the most unsatisfactory." Coming from such an acknowledged authority, these are crushing words, and I therefore consider it but bare justice to record my own individual experience. As to the purely passive rôle of the Reporting Officers, this was clearly laid down for them, and doubtless the authorities will consider whether it is desirable in future. The partisan spirit is again about to show itself. Can it be that as "we"—the Northerners—were invariably successful, our enemies were inclined to think themselves hardly treated? Possibly, however, they did not consider themselves always beaten, for on subsequently reading the accounts of their daily doings as chronicled by my very special enemy—the correspondent of "A Morning Paper" attached to the Invading Force—I found to my surprise that a victory is claimed for them by him in every single fight except the last, that on the River Avon. Even he had to own himself beaten in that interesting engagement.

I would here refer to the admirable work of another zealous band of watchers—those officers of the Auxiliary Forces who attended the camp at Tisbury formed by Colonel the Hon. H. Crichton, the brigadier-general commanding Portsmouth Volunteer Infantry Brigade. It was my good fortune to witness their system of working, and I am convinced that much good was derived by all the officers concerned. The plan was to detail the various members to observe the doings of different units of the Forces engaged. On the conclusion of the day's operations each officer so detailed furnished a written report, which was duly read out at the after-mess gathering. A discussion then followed, and the commandant summed up. Especially interesting to me were his remarks on

cavalry, he being himself an old cavalry officer. Every facility was given by the Head Quarters Staff for learning what was likely to happen the following day, and in his remarks on the concluding day of active operations the Commander-in-Chief referred to the work done in most flattering terms. This is a system which I hope may be extended in future years, and be productive of much benefit to those concerned.

IX.—THE OPERATIONS.

And now a curious thing happens—and one which serves to show that in peace as in war it is the unexpected which arrives. I have come to the part of Hamlet in my play, and you will find that the part is practically cut. I myself thought that the play would be all Hamlet, whereas the other characters appear to have crowded him out. Probably I was expected to deal mainly with the daily operations, and especially perhaps from the tactical point of view. I have, however, but little to say, since they form a large study in themselves, and deserve a separate paper, which I hope some one will read in this place. I found the operations of the greatest interest, and was very much impressed with the zeal displayed by all ranks in their execution. But it was only of the larger movements that one could judge from one's own observation, and what impressed me most was often how little one could see of what was going on. It is highly to be regretted that the fights could not have been continued to a more definite issue on nearly every occasion, but in many cases, as it was, there were useful lessons learned which should prove of value to those engaged. One of the serious problems, however, for future years is how to combine battle training for the subordinate commanders, and for the rank and file, with that afforded to superiors and their Staffs. One or two points only I will mention which came under my especial notice.

On the second day, that is, the first on which the contending infantry were engaged, a curious illustration of the "Fog of Manœuvre" occurred, which shows how apt and true is that lately coined expression—the "Fog of War." As I understood, from the official pink paper, the task of our chief on that day for the defending army, it was to "seize the high ground about Charlton Down, and prevent the enemy advancing on *Salisbury*." And yet after the "Cease fire" had sounded, a staff officer handed me a very similar pink paper, on which was printed the identical order, except that in lieu of *Salisbury*, *Shaftesbury* was substituted. I have both papers here, and, to the best of my belief, at least one of our divisions was acting under the latter special idea. To anyone knowing the locality and circumstances, the importance of the difference will be obvious. I notice from the Report of the C.R.E., Northern Army, that their Field Park "was entirely employed in carrying pumps and hose, and was generally sent on ahead" of the troops; but even if it were the fault of their printers, the Engineers did such good work, and for which they have received such good praise, that we should feel obliged to deal leniently with the type-setters. Moreover, a very slight acquaintance with even the professional printer shows one that he is not mortal—nor is he an angel. On this same day

another point worried me, which was to understand how the invading infantry could have reached Melbury Hill and Compton Down before our first division could get there. This in the light of later experience. Our infantry should have been only some two miles distant, according to Army Orders, whereas, according to the narrative since issued, the invaders were over three miles away, as the crow flies, at the starting hour of 9 a.m., and further, this important hill of Melbury lay practically within the line assigned to our cavalry. And yet, before 10 a.m. apparently, their infantry was in position there, and stopped our attempts to occupy our intended right. I have often wondered whether the 5th Division, instead of marching to "Level 614, Hill Farm," marched to the cross roads at "Hill Farm" nearly two miles further north, and consequently nearer by that distance to the important hill in question. I do not wish to suggest that it was a manœuvre trick, but, however it happened, the fact entirely altered our commander's original plan. It was, therefore, an unpleasant surprise to find that it was not to be ours.

The next day's operations (Saturday) have been the most severely criticised, but a Prussian officer in speaking of this day reminded me of von Moltke's maxim, "If you mean to go, go." I must add, too, that in my humble opinion a flanking position on this day for the defenders appeared to offer peculiar advantages. Monday's fight presented many points of interest, although the cavalry conditions led to an unfortunate muddle at starting. The following day's rear-guard action afforded very valuable instruction to about one-sixth of our force, and caused the enemy to deploy at least four times the same strength against us, a highly successful achievement—at least as we saw it. The cream of the fighting came on the Wednesday—the concluding day of active operations—when occurred the memorable struggle for the River Avon. Ladies and gentlemen, I could easily bore you for an hour or more with a description of that fight alone, but I will spare you. Suffice it to say that it was a genuine success for our arms, always admitting that our rival commander was apparently misled by the wording of his scheme. I will, therefore, quit this fascinating branch of the subject and pass on to other matters. I must, however, first say a word as to the terribly late hour of the night, or rather early hour of the morning, at which the orders were sometimes received, even by commanders of the larger units. The effect of this was that their staffs were often deprived of a large portion of their much-needed rest, those of the smaller units being naturally in even worse plight.

X.—THE MARCH PAST.

The concluding day of the manœuvres, 8th September, was essentially for the people; and since the people pay the piper, it would seem only fair that they should be permitted to select the particular tune preferred. Granting, then, for the moment that such a display is necessary, or at all events desirable, I have no hesitation in saying that nothing could have been more admirably arranged or carried out. The sight was a very beautiful one, and that the people from all the countryside thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle there can be no doubt. The two

armies—or army corps, as you please—drawn up in their long and deep line of massed columns looked imposing. The weather was perfect, and everyone bent on enjoying to the full the beauties of nature as well as the grandness of the performance. For performance it was, after all, and the stage management must be cordially congratulated on their evident appreciation of the highest art—the *ars celare artem*. But does the country care to pay something over £25,000 for its gratification, when one comes to think it over quietly afterwards?

A double interest was imparted to the display, moreover, from the then recent successes of our troops, with their Egyptian and Soudanese comrades, in the far Soudan. The lately contending armies which marched past on Boscombe Down may have been but insignificant in numbers as compared with Continental hosts, but they presented no mean show certainly as regards quality; and unless our foreign visitors and critics are terrible humbugs, they—the latter—were, to my knowledge, very favourably impressed. We know that guests think it their duty to be polite, but there is no obligation upon them to be effusive in their approval. And they were so in more than one instance. I have often wished that I could read the confidential reports furnished to the several foreign Governments by their representatives. They might just as well tell us what they really thought, for we all know how delightful it is “to see ourselves as others see us”—sometimes—but I don’t suppose they will. They will be just as polite as always, and will talk of our good points, and note only for themselves the weak ones.

As regards the bearing of the troops from a professional point of view, I made some notes at the time, of which I will give you a summary. I find that in two important respects I turned traitor on that last day, but then it must be remembered that the war was over, and peace duly decided upon. These notes were recorded on the feeling of the moment “without partiality, favour, or affection.” As regards the infantry, it is a curious fact that, speaking generally, the “Invaders,” or Southern Army, went by much better than our Home Army. But so it was in my opinion. And next, although I know full well that my old battalion is undoubtedly the best in the world, and although it marched past extremely well, it did not strike me as being absolutely the best on the field. It was a rude shock at the time; but I have promised to tell truly, traitor though I feel. I can only trust that I shall not be made to suffer for my candour. Of individual battalions, it seemed to me that none came up to the Scottish Rifles in the way they passed the flag. Possibly the presence of the Commander-in-Chief and Adjutant-General, both of whom had served therein, put them on their mettle. The Militia battalions were no discredit to their respective brigades in the manner in which they went past, and I find entered against the 6th Battalion of Royal Fusiliers—“Sturdy lot.” The words for the 2nd Division—General Clery’s—as a whole, being “Good throughout.” Of the brigades, that of Major-General Hallam Parr seemed to me the best, the two Militia battalions of Connaught Rangers in it being a special credit to the sister isle. Of the divisions, as a whole, none, I thought, came up to that of

General Sir William Butler—the 5th. Amongst the corps troops of “Blue” I find the Durham Light Infantry noted as “Excellent.” As regards the mounted arms, the display was most imposing, and the final gallop past raised cheers from the spectators which will not be soon forgotten. We are accustomed to see our cavalry go by well, as also the artillery, but on this occasion the horse batteries fairly surpassed even themselves in their furious gallop past. On the day following I met a countryman at a local junction many miles away, and he could talk of nothing else but the wild thunder past of these flying batteries. It appeared that he had driven a large party in his lumbering wain to Salisbury, starting fairly early on the Wednesday. Unable to find a roof to cover them for the night in that quaint, old-world, city, the party then “out-spanned” on Boscombe Down, and camped out for the night. After the display was over, he drove his party home again, arriving late on Thursday night—the distance covered being close on 90 miles. I asked him whether he thought it was worth it, to which he replied—and apparently quite astonished at the query—that he wished he could do it again to see the same sight. And yet I venture to urge that such a display is unnecessary and not worth the sum of money which it means. If recruiting were sufficiently encouraged by such pageantry I should be all in favour of a concluding march past, but I doubt it. The time for real training is all too short. One day lost is still one lost day.

XI.—THE MILITIA BATTALIONS.

Since the publication of the Official Report I have seen several letters in a Service paper on the subject of the discipline, or rather the want of discipline, in that Force. I promised to record my own impressions as well as my own experiences, and this I can safely say, that I never once saw any indication of the insubordinate spirit referred to by “A (late) Militia C.O.” in the *Broad Arrow* of February 11th. As far as I could see, the Militia battalions were as the Line battalions, except that they were more sturdy and well-grown as a rule. I took a special and personal interest in watching them when in action, and found that they behaved well. In some cases it struck me that the officers were lacking in experience, but this is scarcely to be wondered at. And here I would venture to suggest to the authorities that keen Militia officers often think that their endeavours to increase their professional knowledge—and consequently their professional value—are not encouraged as they might be, and, in my opinion, as they ought to be. As regards the men, I heard of a curious grievance of a Line sergeant, who complained at the manœuvres that it was impossible for lookers-on to distinguish Regulars from Militia owing to similarity of uniform. In our Northern Army we had a case early in the campaign connected with insufficiency of supply in the matter of a canteen, and this resulted in a discreditable disturbance; but this was the only instance of which I am aware, and it strikes me that the “(late) Militia C.O.” must have been strangely unfortunate in his experiences of our Force. As far as my own experience of the Militia is concerned, I

should be proud to produce the defaulter sheets of the battalion in which I have the honour to serve, and would be further prepared to vouch for the fact that there is no screening of crime. And of many other battalions I know the same story. Is discipline, for the matter of that, absolutely perfect in our own Regular Army or in those of Continental Armies? If the treatment accorded to the Militia, as well as to the Regulars, by the inhabitants of Wiltshire may be taken as any criterion, I can safely state that their behaviour was good, for the Militia were treated in exactly the same way by these kind-hearted folk as were their brethren of the Regulars. But some one—"the (late) Militia C.O.," perhaps—may urge that the inhabitants in their ignorance were not able to distinguish the one from the other. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. For if there had been any marked distinction it could only have been in the matter of behaviour or lack of soldier-like bearing. And this appears to me to show that our men of the Militia are worthy of wearing the same uniform as our Line battalions. Before quitting this subject I would desire to add that the invariable kindness and consideration displayed by the countryside, and the townspeople too, rich and poor alike, towards our soldiery struck me as being one of the healthiest signs of the times. The old prejudice against the profession of arms is slowly but surely breaking down. May the time soon come when the real nobility of such profession is appreciated by all grades of society, and when any slight to Her Majesty's uniform may be looked on as a slight to the nation at large! When war is "on," the soldier is applauded and made much of, but when peace ensues in due course too many still forget their indebtedness to those who have risked their lives perhaps, their health certainly, in defending the honour of the Flag in foreign climes. May the day never come that our people shall have cause to curse themselves and their rulers for neglecting to consider the question of home defence of sufficient importance to be willing to suffer possibly some slight inconvenience even in the perfecting of the military machine!

XII.—THE WORKING OF THE ACT AND COMPENSATION.

As regards the working of the Manœuvres Act in 1898, I am bound to say that I found myself very much out in my expectations. I had studied the Act with some care, and I thought that there were sure to be all sorts of troubles and hitches when it came to be put in execution. As a matter of fact, there were none of any importance that I ever heard of, and naturally, as I, in my fancied astuteness, had thought that it would break down, I tried my best to hear of any. As I have already suggested, we have to thank the local authorities for the broad-minded way in which they accepted the spirit of the Act, and I think it only fair to add from what I have since learned that a considerable measure of this success is due to the very tactful manner in which the secretary to the Commissioners placed the matter on occasions before those local authorities. The Commissioners in concluding their Report "desire to express their high sense of the ability, tact, and industry" of this responsible officer. And in thanking him for "his very valuable services," they add that "the

successful working of the Act of Parliament, and the preparation of the ground for the manœuvres, involving, as both operations did, an immense amount of laborious work, were almost entirely due to his energetic and most able labours." The apparent antagonism which occasionally shows itself in this country between the civil authorities as opposed to the military, is a curious and interesting relic of those memorable days when the former feared to grant any power to the latter. Happily, those days seem to be passing away. As regards the Act itself, it is delightfully short. The one line which serves to introduce it states that it is "an Act to facilitate Military Manœuvres." Ergo, any provision which may be found in it calculated *not* to facilitate military manœuvres is contrary to the spirit of that Act, whatever the letter may be. But it is the letter which kills, and whatever success it may have achieved during the past year owing to the liberal interpretation placed upon its contents, we must bear in mind that it will always be open to some cross-grained pedants to read it in a narrow sense, and it would seem desirable, therefore, that it should be so modified as to prevent possible misconstruction in the future. In the first place, I hope it is true that the Commission for the working of the Act is to be of a permanent nature as regards its nucleus, with additional local representatives each year when the locality for the next ensuing manœuvres has been fixed definitely. Also that more time may be provided for preliminary arrangements.

The Act contains but ten sections, the three last being purely formal. Section 1 deals with the opportunities to be given for objecting to the Act. A draft order has to be sent to all the local councils affected at least six months before such completed order will come into force. Moreover, such draft is not to be submitted to Her Majesty until it has been before each House of Parliament for at least thirty days on which such House sits, and further, unless each House presents an address praying for such order. Then Her Majesty is empowered to issue an Order in Council authorising manœuvres in accordance with the Act. Would not three months be sufficient? This, I now see, is suggested in the Official Report. Section 2 deals with the powers exercisable for purposes of manœuvres. As regards the prevention of trespass and damage by civilians the powers are none too clear. "The officer in command," says the Act, "shall be "empowered to prevent trespass or damage to property by persons not "belonging to the Forces." To what extent can force, if necessary, be used? Section 7 will be found to have a certain bearing on the case, but the provisions might well be more clear as well as more stringent. Candidly, I do not understand what that "shall be empowered to prevent" may mean. Section 3 refers to the closing of roads; but what with restrictions relating to "two justices of the peace, not being military officers in command of the Forces," and petty sessions, and due notice in the newspapers, and so forth, and so forth, the value of the concession as regards military manœuvres practically vanishes into thin air, since the opposing commanders could be easily aware of the other's intentions.

Section 4 deals with the Commission, but only two representative members may be appointed for each county, two for the New Forest, and the remainder, to be appointed by the Secretary of State, must not be as numerous as the representative members. As but two counties—Dorset and Wilts—were last year affected, the total number amounted to seven, and although the Commission may act by three of its number, the margin of safety is very small if many meetings should be required. Section 5 grants power to the Commission to make certain orders and regulations. They determine what lands, roads, and sources of water are to be “authorised” lands, roads, and sources within the meaning of the Act. But prior to such order being made, a draft must be sent to the District Council and notice advertised for two successive weeks in at least two newspapers circulating generally within those limits. Surely, as the county has two representative members on the Commission, this seems an ultra-careful safeguarding of rights. The Commission must hold at least one public meeting to hear objections to the draft order, and, “if necessary,” revise this draft order, and within a week of such meeting send the revised draft to the objecting council. I happen to know that in 1898 four of such meetings were wanted in one single day. Naturally, the small numbers of the Commission rendered this quite impossible. With an obstructive clerk to the magistrates the possibilities seem almost boundless. The next section, 6, is of the highest importance, since it deals with compensation for “damage.” Under it compensation officers may be appointed, *with the concurrence of the Treasury*—how the very name of that dreaded department of State frightens most of us in relation to military matters!—and these officers authorised to determine as speedily as possible any claim and settle the amount payable. The claims were certainly settled generally as speedily as possible, and on occasion the ready £5 cheque was almost a matter of chaff. But I fear very much that the Bill for Compensation must have been very widely removed from a joke. It must not be forgotten that the next shower of rain may materially alter the estimate as to damage inflicted by the passage of troops over land, and such speedy settlement may well err in the matter of undue generosity to the damaged one. The Commissioners in their Report call attention to the practice of farmers employing professional valuers in assessing the amounts due to them as compensation, such valuers being paid a percentage on what they obtained for their clients. This is clearly wrong, and liable to lead to abuses. The paragraph concludes.—“Almost invariably, claims made through such agents appear to be exceedingly highly assessed.”

Section 7 is the last, other than those dealing with formalities, and provides for the punishment of certain offences—to wit, the wilful and unlawful obstruction of, or interference with, the execution of manœuvres, or the entering or remaining in camp without due authority. Such offender is liable to be removed by a constable, or by a commissioned officer, or by order of the latter; penalty 40s. Also with the removal of flags or other mark distinguishing, or the maliciously cutting or damaging any telegraph wire; penalty £5. But one would like to see here some

severe penalty for false or fraudulent claims in the matter of compensation. One well-known officer desired to attach to the notices begging claims for compensation to be sent in, a paragraph to the effect that any such claim, if found to be fraudulent, would entail severe penalties. But under the Act itself the claimant could not be touched. Would it not be as well, then, to insert some such provision in this section?

In conclusion, as regards compensation for damage, I have very little doubt that it would be hard to find any individual of the civil community who had not been handsomely recompensed in the matter. As regards the military element, I happen to know one or two decidedly hard cases the other way. Take the matter of uniform alone. Certain distinguished battalions wear white fatigue jackets. As these were undoubtedly too noticeable for tactical purposes, and would, moreover, serve to disclose the identity of opposing units, these unfortunates had to hack out their heavily laced red coats, thereby causing very grave inconvenience to the wearers, as well as very serious expense.

XIII.—THE OFFICIAL REPORT.

I am assuming that my soldier listeners, at least, have studied with care the able and searching Report recently issued. Possibly even the ladies might find an interest in much of its contents, since the defence of our shores is of vital importance to them also. I have told you of my own rude awakening on its publication, but none the less it has given me the greatest pleasure to read. True that the administrative branches of the Service have received considerably more attention than the combative—or combatant. But it cannot be impressed too strongly how all-important are those same administrative branches. For the sake of brevity, in official work the purely combatant side is known as “A,” the more civilian as “B.” Well, the “B” side has certainly played the part of Jacob, and has successfully “supplanted” its brother Esau, the firstborn “A.” But it is obvious that those in authority know only too well the importance of “B,” and have chosen wisely. I, as an individual, attended these manœuvres in the hopes of learning all sorts of lessons in the detailed handling of the fighting troops. Wofully therefore was I disappointed in this respect, however interested I may have been in the larger handling of masses. When one considers, however, that with an inexperienced staff, or with an ill-organised “B” service, the finest fighting troops in the world are but a helpless conglomeration of wasted units, I think one must admit that the lesson as taught was of even greater value than tactical exercises. The bubble of civilian transport and civilian supply has been fairly burst—at least as regards the troops in front—and let us be thankful that we have learned the lesson in mimic warfare as between ourselves, rather than in the death grip with a hostile force upon our shores. Let us learn our lesson, therefore, and set our military house in order whilst we have yet time. Our men can fight; our men will fight; above all to defend our hearths and homes, our wives, our daughters, our mothers, our sisters. But in the absence of proper organisation, valour alone will not suffice. The French in 1871 were

brave enough and ready enough to suffer and to die. But of what avail were their efforts against the steady mechanism of the German hosts? The Southern commander sums up the situation when he writes of these manœuvres:—"They have cost a large sum, but they were cheap at any price." H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, in his Report, puts his finger on a weak spot as regards the lack of instruction for subordinate commanders, and it is highly desirable, if possible, that such may be combined with the higher teaching, since still more value will be obtained. For my part, I fully believe that in future years, and in the light of growing experience, such *will* be obtained. It must not be forgotten that we are but beginners in the art of great manœuvres, and in the opinion of the official representative of a friendly great Power—from which we are ever ready to learn in matters military—these late manœuvres were, considering the many difficulties to be contended with, full of instruction. Possibly he meant to himself in a negative sense, and as a looker-on; but I do not think that he was so cruelly bitter in his comment. Lord Wolseley himself says:—"It would be optimistic to say that the fullest tactical value was obtained from each day's operations." Sir Redvers Buller, on the other hand, sums up his impressions as follows:—"The most valuable days to myself, and also to my staff, were, I am sure, those on which there were no collisions on a large scale. The lessons of manœuvres are not those given by stage battles." I wish to submit that if only a section of those engaged are to learn their lesson on these occasions, it is of infinitely greater importance to the nation that such section should consist of the higher commanders and the higher staffs, with plenty of object-lessons thrown in for the Head Quarters Staff at Pall Mall and the Directing Staff of the Manœuvres. But I contend further that there were many valuable lessons unconsciously learned by those lower in the military hierarchy. The experience of wars shows much marching and many periods of weary waiting. These are valuable experiences, and are much conducive to the perfecting and improvement of discipline. The troops which cannot remain inactive when required so to do—much as they may be longing to have their dash at the enemy—are not disciplined in the true sense of the word, and their waiting experiences in the recent manœuvres may well prove of inestimable value. Indeed this very waiting seemed often to me to be one of the most real features in the Salisbury campaign, and it is in this very respect that we have so often shown our pre-eminence in the past. Let us profit then by our own manœuvre experience, and whilst gladly availing ourselves of that of our Continental neighbours let us not forget the essentially different conditions under which theirs are held, and let us not be too ready to condemn root and branch a first experiment because it does not work absolutely without hitch.

XIV.—SUGGESTIONS.

It must be obvious to you by this time that the impressions formed by at least one disinterested spectator of our late manœuvres were distinctly favourable. The most noticeable features to my mind were the

genuine zeal and hard work of all concerned. If the energy was in some cases misapplied, or if adequate return was not obtained, it was through no fault of the worker—although possibly sometimes owing to want of previous training. Let us see, then, if we can devise some method of obtaining full value in future years. It appears to me that the time for us was scarcely ripe for manœuvres on such a large scale—interesting though they proved. With smaller forces engaged, the arrangements in all respects might be made complete, and carried out in every essential as though on active service. I would suggest, then, that, of Regulars at all events, there should be at the most but two opposing Divisions, with say a regiment of cavalry and a battery of R.H.A. added in each case. But these two Divisions must be complete in every detail—lock, stock, and barrel. Further, to obtain the full benefit of the training, I would suggest that these two Divisions should be dumped down one day—a Monday for choice—at two selected stations some three days' march from the area selected for contact. To obtain additional rail and steam-boat experience, let one Division come from Ireland. These two stations would serve as advanced depôts, and no civilian transport should be allowed in advance of them, or at most only that of the new-fashioned supply parks. All details of brigade and divisional supply columns, as well as similar field hospitals, and of bearer companies with brigades, to be completed to war strength. The fighting units to be made up also to war strength by the addition of their own reserve men, by which means an additional lesson of value would be obtained. Each commander might be ordered to find his opponent, and the marching experience would thus be gained. Batteries to be full and wagons complete. Ammunition Columns a reality—not the mere skeletons which we saw last year. Tents seem unfortunately to be looked upon as a necessity, but how far more real would be a modified system of billeting, and how much valuable experience would be gained by the necessity for arranging such billets on the spot as in war! Plenty of owners would be ready enough to hire out sheds and outbuildings; and authority, on reasonable payment, might be included in the Act—not the exaggerated rents which we saw paid for hire of camping-grounds last year. Out-posts to be posted each night as on service; the troops to march with all military precautions. Regimental transport to be according to the authorised scale, and officers to make reasonable arrangements for living, as they would have to do in the field. It would seem no great hardship even if the general mess had to be broken up and company officers live together, as some of us have seen before. No luxuries to be permitted, and the intolerable strain of “minerals” rigorously prohibited. If beer or other intoxicants could under service conditions be procurable, let them now be so, but not otherwise. Let due precautions be taken for the prevention of excess or breaking of bounds, and let the punishment for such offences be exemplary. Is it contended that our officers and men would be so lacking in proper feeling and patriotism as to be unwilling to submit to such small privations, or even personal inconvenience?

I quote again from the *Globe*—of September 16th—since the views therein expressed coincide in every way with my own on the subject:—

“We would further urge that during manœuvres the troops should not be led to expect luxuries, as they were on this occasion, although in point of fact the fulfilment did not always come up to the expectation. To anyone who watched the hundreds of cases of ‘minerals’—the haulage of which is a serious matter indeed—being laboriously transported over the hilly country of Dorset and Wiltshire, the spectacle was a sad one, and not in accordance with common sense. Let the men have necessities by all means, and let them have plenty, but it is impossible to supply them with luxuries for which someone or something—in this case the unfortunate horses—must suffer. The British soldier may grumble, it is true, but the heart of the British soldier is in the right place, and he will be willing to deny himself when he realises the necessity. It may also be hoped that on the next occasion the supply columns shall not be considered as neutral, so that the commanders may have to take them into consideration in their calculations, whereby additional lessons of value may be gained. As to the question of dispensing altogether with tents or only on special occasions when some specially rapid operation is contemplated by either commander, or when the weather is exceptionally favourable—this must be a matter for future consideration.”

Would that every officer and man, likely to be engaged in future manœuvres, might read these words and weigh them well before expecting to be supplied with luxuries. Any one who witnessed the painful sights in connection with their transport, which I myself have seen, will realise the justice of this plea on behalf of the horses. In war, cruelty is sometimes a stern necessity; but in this one respect at least we can make our peace manœuvres a little less hard on our dumb and faithful accomplices.

On the Wednesday, then, of the suggested manœuvre week, the troops might be within striking distance of each other, and a short fight *might* take place if such would occur in reality, in consequence of the intentions and dispositions of respective commanders. It would not seem an impossible task to frame a scheme which should ensure their knocking their heads together within a certain limited area on the day selected. During the remaining days of the week, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, the active operations would continue, and on the Saturday afternoon or evening, home they all go—pardon spectators, ladies and gentlemen all, and especially perhaps ladies—*without the inevitable march past*. Or allow a Sunday to be the middle day, and arrange accordingly. Say, at the outside, that the week's work will cost even £100,000. It is, after all, but the half of last year's bill, and I firmly believe that the country's defenders would get still more value from such arrangement. If more troops are thought desirable, why not utilise local Militia and local Yeomanry, and, if necessary further, local or other Volunteers? These would all appreciate it if they felt that the thing was real. As an alternative scheme, one of the forces might come wholly by sea, and gain the experience of disembarking on a hostile shore, the defending force being concentrated by rail, and supplemented by local auxiliaries. I throw out this latter suggestion in the hope that it may find favour with those in power, for it seems to me that it would provide the best possible test of the readiness or otherwise of our military machine to deal with a force which has succeeded in effecting a landing. As regards the working of

the supply and transport branches, the problem could scarcely present much difficulty to our Staff and Army Service Corps, since I myself found the pieces of the puzzle fitting themselves together after a little patient thought. If those engaged in such operations once felt that there was an actuality and reality about them, I believe that they would readily and cheerfully undergo some measure of discomfort or even of hardship.

From year to year the selected localities, for assembly and advanced depôts at least, might be varied, and at intervals, when Parliament felt especially generous, the magnitude of the operations and the numbers engaged might be increased. The benefit of the smaller years would then, I believe, be felt, and we should learn more fully our minimum requirements in the matter of the important "B" or administrative services. As regards the civilian element for these duties, if such there must be, it is absolutely essential that those employed during manœuvres must be subject, to some extent at least, to military law; or to some special legislation to be provided in an amended Manœuvres Act.

Moreover, full advantage could be taken, at least *en route* to the battle area, of the varied nature of English country. For home defence our troops require to be exercised in the average country of our island, and I would again impress on you that the open down land of Wilts and Dorset does not afford this kind of training. I leave it to more able minds than my own to develop this idea, and hope that the points which I have raised may be deemed worthy of discussion this afternoon.

XV.—CONCLUSION.

I would only add how pleased I am if I have disappointed some of you who, like Balak, the son of Zippor, came to-day in the hopes of hearing—well, not blessings, and who have found me a very Balaam, the son of Zeor. It is so easy to criticise—so hard to do. I maintain that the manœuvres of 1898 were a success, despite their little failures—perhaps even on account of those failures—and well worth the money expended on them. Honest hard work is never lost, and is a pleasure to see. The enormous amount of work got through by those concerned in these operations was both onerous and trying, and would scarcely be credited by those who sit in their comfortable arm-chairs and criticise. Speaking generally, too, the higher the sphere the greater was the labour involved. It is therefore only fair to record the fact. But the work was done without a murmur, and in many cases, as I can vouch for, without any particular idea of how much good work was being accomplished. The old dogged spirit of British pluck and British perseverance is not yet dead, and England's glory has not yet departed. If European complications must again one day come upon us, I do not think that an expeditionary force from these shores is likely to be despised or treated as a negligible quantity. Indeed, I think that such assistance is quite likely to be much sought after. As regards the work of our guiding staff, it must not be forgotten that immediately prior to, and during, the early

days of our Salisbury Manœuvres, some others of importance were in progress elsewhere—I allude to the Soudan. We all know the glorious results of those others, but I doubt whether quite enough credit has been given to those in authority at home here for their loyal co-operation and assistance. At the same time we in Wiltshire could not fail to notice the tension caused by the temporary uncertainty as to what the result of those even more important operations was to be. We felt that they must succeed, we knew from past experience that the guiding mind on the spot could be trusted, and yet until we received the definite news of success—and our guns thundered forth their welcome salute on that peaceful Sunday morn—the strain upon all of us refused to be relieved. But none the less our home campaign was carried through in the most thorough and painstaking manner. Mistakes there may have been, indeed mistakes there were. But so much the better for us, since by the making of mistakes we learn to avoid them in future; and I venture to say that to none are the mistakes then made better known than to those responsible for the Grand Manœuvres of 1898. By the recognition of such mistakes, and by their methodical correction, the military forces of the Crown will approach ever closer and closer to that ideal perfection never perhaps quite attainable.

Thus will Great Britain—and, I trust in the near future, Greater Britain—be enabled to maintain that leading position in the world's affairs which is hers by right of past successes, and the lives, so freely given, by many noble sons. Thus will she be ever ready to defend the honour of her Flag the wide world over, when her cause is just, and others choose to force a quarrel upon her. Her little Army will thus be ready, as of old, to devote itself, even unto death, for Justice and for Freedom. Ready, as of old, to fight for Queen and country, and, with unblemished honour, uphold the proud and kingly motto "*Dieu et mon droit.*"

T. MILLER MAGUIRE, ESQ., LL.D. :—I should not, Sir, have risen in such an adventurous manner before so many experienced officers, only I began to feel that a kind of killing frost was following the admirable address of our excellent lecturer. I think it is very unfair after a lecturer has gone to all the pains of writing and delivering an elaborate treatise that his allocution should be followed by no discussion at all, although to some extent that is a compliment, because it seems to imply that everybody present agrees with every word that he has said. I happen to be one of those present agreeing with every word he said, in the main; but I venture to differ from him in two or three somewhat unimportant details. In the first place, I differ from him in this respect, that whereas he was a partisan and was attached, during the manœuvres, to one side only, it was my happy lot, during the manœuvres, which I followed from beginning to end, to be attached to both sides, and to be, therefore, entirely without any partisanship at all, and absolutely impartial. To me Red was as interesting as Blue, and Blue as attractive as Red. I agree with him entirely in believing that from start to finish the manœuvres were an admirable idea, most beneficial to all concerned; valuable to the soldiers, valuable to the civilians, and encouraging to the nation at large; tending to make the people of Wiltshire respect themselves, and tending to give a better tone to the Army itself, and a higher position to the Army in the opinion of its fellow citizens. From these points of view, if nothing else came from the manœuvres, they would have been worth twice the money that was spent upon them, because ours being

a volunteer Army, it is absolutely necessary that people should be encouraged to volunteer; and it is absolutely necessary that the friends of the people who volunteer should feel a sympathy with them, and that mothers and sisters should be proud of their relatives who join the Army. Accordingly, under the conditions which are nurtured by these manœuvres, you must get a better class of troops, and that better class of troops is well worth any money you can spend upon them. Therefore, I entirely agree with the learned lecturer that the manœuvres were well worth the money. In another point I agree with him, and that is, where he disclaims destructive criticism. It always strikes me as very curious that a large proportion of our military writers find everything to admire in every foreign Army and nothing but things to condemn in our own Army. Yet the history of our own Army is at least as good as the history of any foreign Army. The lecturer said that mistakes occur, and he seemed to apologise for mistakes occurring in military affairs. Why, every lady here could tell us that mistakes are frequently occurring even in her admirably managed household, much more easily managed than an army corps. And every lawyer could tell us that mistakes—and ruinous and costly mistakes—are made by judges and Q.C.'s, causing appeals and any amount of waste of money. The greatest master of war in this century has said that he who does not make mistakes never makes war. Everybody else is allowed to make mistakes except a British military officer. The British officers in the Wiltshire manœuvres made mistakes; but, if I had time, Sir, I should be able to prove that German and every other foreign officers, have made equally serious mistakes in peace manœuvres, and in war manœuvres. In point of fact, in the whole history of mankind, from 400 B.C. until now, of all the generals of every race, only seven conducted any considerable series of military manœuvres without having made dreadful mistakes. The most disastrous mistakes of all were made by Napoleon himself, mistakes of conception and mistakes of execution. These seven belonged to very different nationalities. There was the Macedonian, Alexander; the Carthaginian, Hannibal; the Roman, Cæsar; the two Tartars, Ghengis Khan and Tamerlane; an Englishman and an Irishman, Marlborough and Wellington. Now, Sir, another valuable lesson is, suppose we did make mistakes, suppose a private individual is going on making mistakes, is it not a very good thing on the part of his friends to show him his mistakes clearly, and put him into the right way for the future? If that be the case with a private individual, *a fortiori* it is the case of the Army and the Navy. You could not spend money on a private individual better than in correcting his mistakes, and if you are a nation you cannot spend money better than in correcting your mistakes. If you are the military part of the nation the sooner you correct them the better, or you will involve yourselves and your nation in common ruin. Death-bed repentance may be of some value to a private individual—although it is cutting it very fine—but it is utter ruin to a nation. And if we found that we were liable to make serious mistakes during the course of the Wiltshire manœuvres, whether by employing civilian transport or otherwise, then we spent our money very well indeed in finding out those mistakes, and we ought to spend a great deal more money in trying to correct them in the future. As to transport, I agree with the lecturer, that practically it is the “be-all and end-all” of the art of manœuvring. In those broad points, therefore, I agree with Major Marshall-West, but I disagree with him in two small points. I do not know how it is that he manages to subsist without luxury. If so, he is the only celebrated military chief in all history who has ever tried to do anything of the kind. Why should not the officers of the Army get as many luxuries as they can, whether in campaign or out of campaign? Will the gallant lecturer, in his reply, point out to me any great leader of mankind that did not, from the battle of Arbela to the battle of Tel-el-Kebir—I won't mention more modern battles—eat and drink as much as he could get? As the Germans are supposed to be the great leaders in the art of war, I have to tell you that they swallowed everything they possibly could from morning to night during the campaign in France. They smoked millions of cigars per diem. They drank as

much spirits as they could possibly absorb. They were served out with their spirits—not soda-water, which our friend objects to, but orange-bitters in abundance, a very different beverage. Not only so, but in addition to getting “bitters” and an allowance of spirits which would make an Irishman tipsy, they took an enormous quantity of wine, partly bought and partly appropriated. This they did from the beginning to the end of the war, and yet they managed to fight and to win. As for cigars their consumption was prodigious, and they were encouraged to make themselves as comfortable when quartered in French villas or peasants’ houses as possible. They acted on this advice. Soldiers should procure abundance of things that they can possibly get, in so far as it does not mitigate against their military efficiency. Of course, excess is quite another thing, but a temperate use of soda-water cannot be *very* bad! Now, coming to the march past, I do hope, Sir, you will induce the lecturer to mitigate his ferocity against that most delightful function. I consider it from the point of view of an income-tax payer—an I. T. payer, as he calls it—well worth the money, and I am not alone in that view. Every spectator shared my view; many paid several pounds a head to see the show. We should have been greatly disappointed if we had not had that march past—a hundred thousand of us, half of us ladies. Now, Sir, inasmuch as the population of these isles consists, at least, half of women, and as their husbands or brothers or sons fight for us, and as the sons of the richer women are our officers, and as the sons of comparatively poorer women are our privates, I say that everything compatible with military efficiency should be done to gratify them and to encourage them to take an interest in the Army; and a march past does that in a very cheap and in a very effective manner. These are the few remarks I have to make, and I have to congratulate the audience on the address, which was the result of thorough experience with regard to the subject-matter, as I know very well, having come across the lecturer when he was with his ever victorious Northern Army, and I was marching from the South. It is not only the result of ripe experience, but it was well conceived, well composed, and a thing very rare amongst modern speakers, ecclesiastical or lay, admirably well, and clearly delivered.

Colonel the Hon. H. G. CRICHTON (Commanding Portsmouth Volunteer Infantry Brigade):—My excuse, Sir, for rising is that the gallant lecturer has been good enough to mention my name in connection with the humble effort of mine to help officers of the branch of the Service that I now belong to, viz., the Volunteers, to gain as much information as they could out of these manœuvres. I beg leave to thank him for his kindly mention of our little efforts, and I am very glad that we have met with his approbation. The Commander-in-Chief was also good enough to express his approval, and to hope that the same thing would take place in future years. I may be permitted perhaps to say that we had rather too few officers of the Auxiliary Forces there, and I hope another year that more officers of that Force will join us in our efforts to get information. The system we went on was to choose some central place so that we could be as near as possible to all the actions as they took place. Of course, when the armies were so far apart, we had some distance to go; but by means of that very useful instrument called the “bike,” and also by the use of horses, we managed always to be there or thereabouts. We went on the system of detaching officers to each individual brigade and each division, and at the end of the day we collected the reports, and had a general discussion on the manœuvres of the day. The officers who were there were deeply interested, and I am sure we could not, any of us, help gathering very useful information. If it took place another year I think it might no doubt be improved upon, but I do not think that a moving camp would be of any advantage, because it is more expensive, and you have not so much time when you come home for discussion; therefore I should not recommend the camp moving, but if more officers joined it might be done on a more economical scale than it was this year. It cost rather more, I think, than £1 per

head per diem. So far as the manœuvres go, there is one thing I should like to say, and that is, that, having taken part in the manœuvres of 1872, there was one particular difference that I noticed between those manœuvres and the manœuvres of last year. In the first place, in the matter of transport, we had (at all events in the cavalry) regimental transport. We got a class of rather heavier horses to start with; we trained them in our barracks for weeks before we started, and also had sergeants of artillery down to train our men as drivers. We had, most excellent transport. We had an officer in charge; we had our forge carts, and every cart that was required. We were thoroughly independent of everybody. As a rule, we did not know where we were going to encamp each night, and as long as it was tolerably near water where we could take our horses, we did not care. I happened to mention this to a staff officer, and he said, "It is all very well, but in those days the doctor was not so particular about what water the men drank; now the doctors are so very particular you have to fix beforehand the places where your camps are going to be." That, of course, makes it easier also for the transport, and rather spoils the manœuvres. The question of regimental *versus* civilian transport has not been very much discussed, but I must say from what I saw in those 1872 manœuvres, when we were never without our tents for a period of more than an hour or so after we had come in, when our regimental canteens were always well supplied, and the men never had to wait for their soda-water or their beer, that in my humble opinion there is nothing like a regimental system. I am afraid that that opinion is not held by those high in authority, and in any future manœuvres we shall still stick to brigade canteens and divisional transport. But my own mind is perfectly made up after seeing these two manœuvres, the one a success and the other a failure in these particulars, that there is nothing like the regimental transport and the regimental supplies.

Colonel T. S. CAVE (1st Vol. Batt. Hampshire Regiment):—It has been suggested by Major Marshall-West and elsewhere, that at the next autumn manœuvres two divisions should be mobilised on a war strength, and that on the principle that would prevail in the case of emergency, that is to say, in accordance with the mobilisation regulations. Now I know that the difficulty, or rather the fear, that the authorities at the War Office have in calling out the reserves for such a purpose is contained in the word "employers." They, in fact, are afraid to have out the Militia for an extended period or to call up the reserves, because they think the men would lose their employment when they went home. This fear, as we know in the Volunteer Force is by no means groundless. I am a considerable employer myself and I know that it is a real difficulty. Therefore I will make a suggestion at this meeting which I hope will gravitate to our political rulers. An Act came into force last year which made employers liable to compensate workmen for any accidents they might meet with, whether they (the employers) were at all to blame or not. What I would suggest is that in the case of a Reserveman, a Militiaman, or an efficient Volunteer, the Government should take upon itself the responsibility of compensation for accident when the employer is in no way to blame for it. If the Government would introduce a clause to this effect into an amending Act which they will very soon have to pass, making the provisions of the Act more general, and in all cases exempting the employers when the man is one whose employment is divided between themselves and the State, I venture to say that instead of employers looking shyly upon men who are serving in the Militia because they are taken away for a period of 28 or more days, or Volunteers because they want an occasional day or week, or Reserves who may have to do a certain amount of training or be liable to be taken away altogether, these men, on the contrary, will be at a premium in the labour market, and the authorities need not be afraid of mobilising their two divisions because of the employment bugbear. There is one other remark that I should like to make with reference to the manœuvres of last year. The whole difficulties of the transport were not, in my humble estimation, because they were working

on a divisional system rather than a regimental one. The text-books are perfectly sound in laying it down that there must be both regimental transport and divisional transport. The whole difficulty was that the men who were in charge of the teams were untrained. What you want is a trained *personnel*. The training that is required for the transport is by no means so great as the training that is required to make an artilleryman or a cavalryman, or perhaps even an infantryman; and quite sufficient might be done for our civilian transport drivers on a Militia basis. I will not say that the Regular transport should not be increased to some extent, but to a much larger extent there should be raised both Militia and Volunteer Army Service Corps, the former should be called out with civilian wagons and horses for manœuvres of the Regular and Militia forces, and in case of emergency the Volunteer A.S.C. should co-operate with Volunteers at all times. This would, I am convinced, get over the difficulty of the transport, which is one of the greatest that Armies have to contend with. Let us have always the wagons, horses, and the harness, and, if possible, the driver who is accustomed to go with them; but give him at any time a slight military training and the transport service will very soon become efficient.

Major MARSHALL-WEST, in reply, said:—I do not know that I have very much to say with reference to the kind remarks which the several officers have made. I find that the ideas expressed really agree with my own, and I think in some cases it was owing to the fact that I had not expressed myself very clearly that some exception was taken to my remarks. Amongst the very kind and humorous remarks which Dr. Miller Maguire made, he took exception to my views respecting that difficult question of luxuries, but I am bound to say that he has not altered my opinion the least little bit in the world. I would call his attention to what my wording was, for it was somewhat carefully chosen. I said, "If beer or other intoxicants could, *under service conditions*, be procurable, let them now be so, but not otherwise," because the point which he raises, and which he illustrates so aptly by historical example, was a point which really crossed my mind. My whole idea with reference to the manœuvres is to make them as real as possible, and I firmly believe that the more real you can make them, the more interested you will make everyone engaged in them. With reference to the terrible increase in transport, we are all talking about the same thing in reality. When Colonel Sturmy Cave talks about transport, it is the old question cropping up. If you go in for all these luxuries you increase your transport, and how are you going to do it? I am sure that many of you must have seen what I myself saw in connection with these immense transport columns. We find them blocking up our fighting columns and making nonsense of the whole thing. At this late stage I will only repeat very strongly that in one of the suggestions I had ventured to make with regard to transport and supply this unfortunate fact of the supply columns being considered neutral was uppermost in my mind. Again, as regards obtaining luxuries, every soldier who is worth his salt will always do the best he can for himself, and an officer will do the best he can for his men when he is on service; but, at the same time, there must be a certain amount of unreality in this respect when engaged in manœuvres. For one thing we are fighting every day, and that is, generally speaking, not quite like the Real Thing. On service one has to go without things, one cannot get all the things one would like. When you have a long time in camp or a fairly long period in camp, you take good care that you get what you want if there is any way of doing it, and the British officer and British soldier are neither of them very particular what they pay for things under the circumstances. They want something, and they get it if it is possible; but they cannot have it when they are on the move from day to day. I think, therefore, that in consideration of military operations, and the necessity of daily movement, it is very unfortunate that those movements should be unduly hampered in this way. As regards the march past, I myself enjoyed the spectacle thoroughly. I thought it not only a very beautiful sight, but I also thought it was a great credit to our troops. But the one question

I would put to Dr. Maguire is, "Has that march past in September last had the faintest effect on recruiting?" I doubt it, I am sorry to say. And if it has no effect on recruiting, then it is not worth the money spent upon it. As regards Colonel Crichton's remarks about regimental transport, and those of Colonel Sturmy Cave, it struck me that they were rather at cross-purposes. They were both meaning, I think, the same thing. I fancy that Colonel Crichton was referring to regimental transport only, and was not thinking of the second line of supply at the time; whereas Colonel Sturmy Cave was going behind it. It seems to me that the regimental transport for the immediate belongings of the unit should be most certainly carried out regimentally, and if any officer will read the suggestions I made in the close of my paper he will find that this arrangement is involved. I urged that the whole thing should be carried out according to regulation. With reference to supply and transport arrangements, we have the regimental transport carrying a certain amount of supplies, and with the exception of departmental transport for certain units and staffs, the whole thing is done regimentally as far as the immediate supply is concerned. What was in my mind was that it should be worked with that regimental transport, backed up by the supply columns, and backed up further by what is now called the supply park. That is the essence of my suggestion. Whatever the existing regulation may be with regard to transport and supply, let them be carried out in their entirety. If the regulations should change to-morrow, I say, very well, change our manœuvre arrangements to-morrow; but whatever the theory of war is, let it be practised wholly and thoroughly in peace. For by such means will our Forces be more fitted to take the field if war should come.

The CHAIRMAN (Major-General J. B. Sterling):—I am sure I shall have the sympathies of the audience with me when I propose a very hearty vote of thanks to Major Marshall-West for this interesting lecture. It is not only a valuable lecture in itself, but it opens a field of thought which requires very grave consideration. There are certain points which seem to me to be clear. In some measure the transport for the manœuvres failed. It was essential that it should fail, because the men who carried out the transportation were inexperienced in the work. You might as well expect to send water-men to sea in a man-of-war and expect them to fight the guns, as to expect civilian drivers who had been driving, probably, beer carts about London, to move across country in difficult formations, with an enormous mass of troops before and behind them and other wagons blocking the road. The men were inexperienced, and, therefore, the transport failed. But that does not condemn the system. If you have a great body of troops, and you are going to keep them perfectly horsed and perfectly armed with military transport, the expense on the taxpayer will be ruinous, and consequently impossible. Therefore, whether you are in India, in Egypt, or in England, you must employ civilian transport, and the sooner you organise the civilian transport in some form or other, the sooner you will help to make your fighting units formidable. I was delighted at this question of transport coming to the front. It has been a bugbear to me all my soldiering time that it is so little studied. On occasions—Colonel Sturmy Cave will bear me out—when they have been good enough to ask me to arrange games for kriegspiel for the Volunteers, one of the first things I have done is to try and organise a large column of transport such as is necessary in war, and ask the officers, in working out their schemes, to consider this very grave question. I have had all sorts of questions put to me by Regulars and Volunteers. They say, "I do not like these red caterpillars on the march across the table." I have replied, "If you do not face the circumstances in rehearsals, how can you face them when they are more necessary in war?" One of the first things Lord Kitchener had to deal with was the transport over a single line of communication, 1,500 miles long, with undependable steam-engines and undependable steamers to work with. It is to his great glory that he succeeded in working that single line in a way that

other countries have tried to work single railways, and have absolutely and totally failed. We know by experience that single railways in other countries have failed. With the distances to be travelled and the enormous number of men that will be in the field in modern war, it is a growing necessity to find a solution, and one eventual solution will be the development of railway management. I think you will all agree with me that the lecturer has given us a most valuable lecture, and on behalf of the audience I tender him the most sincere thanks for having taken the trouble to prepare it.