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THE REVIVAL AND TRAINING OF LIGHT INFANTRY IN THE BRITISH ARMY, 1757—1806.

By CAPTAIN J. F. C. FULLER, 2nd Oxfordshire and
Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

THE ORIGIN OF LIGHT TROOPS.

LIGHT troops, and particularly light infantry, have been employed from the very earliest days. Rameses II., in the thirteenth century B.C., made extensive use of them; and as an organized force, light troops had probably formed part of the Egyptian Army hundreds of years before his reign. The ancient Assyrians also used them in nearly all their wars, and the Greeks attached to their huge phalanxes of heavy infantry 8,000 of these lightly-equipped troops, but they never thoroughly understood their tactics, training, or organization. The Romans made constant use of them until their decline; but of all the troops of antiquity, none equalled the Carthaginians in light infantry tactics, and of all light infantry leaders, probably Hannibal stands the greatest; certainly he stands unrivalled for two thousand years, that is until the days of Napoleon and Wellington, and the able commanders of the units which formed the Light Division, Sir John Moore, General Craufurd, and others.

DECAY OF LIGHT TROOPS.

After the fall of the Roman Empire light troops ceased to exist, that is to say, as an organized force, save in the Byzantine Army, and were not raised again until the general revival of infantry, which took place early in the fourteenth century. The invention of gunpowder and the adoption of the matchlock brought them still more to the fore, until, at the battle of Pavia, 1525, we find 1,500 arquebusiers extended as a skirmishing line in front of the French battalions. The middle of the seventeenth century saw the invention of the fusil, or flint-lock, and we then find special picked shots armed with this more certain weapon for skirmishing purposes, and named fusiliers. But well before the end of the seventeenth century these troops were merged into the line, or rather those of the line were merged into the fusiliers, all troops being armed with the flint-lock; and the result was that mass fire became the order of the day, and

skirmishing disappears almost completely from the history of warfare for over a century.

THE REINTRODUCTION OF LIGHT INFANTRY.

In the Seven Years' War, which, in 1756, was begun by Frederick the Great, and in the war which was already being waged between the English and French in North America, we find the origin of a new epoch in tactics. We find that the circumstances were such that light infantry willy nilly, and in spite of all the opposition of the military pedants of the linear systems, were once again forced into existence as the only possible means of preventing massed troops from being annihilated by the fire of individual riflemen, and, further, as a means of meeting irregulars with their own tactics, and of initiating the fire fight by the demoralizing fire of skirmishers in place of the resounding volleys of compact lines of troops moving shoulder to shoulder in a three-deep formation.

This important revival of light troops we may trace to three definite sources:—

1. The introduction of Jägers into the Austrian Army.
2. The introduction of Chasseurs into the French Army by the Duke de Broglie. "He gave to each battalion a light company, and expected his whole infantry to be able to fight in extended order." He employed these tactics at Bergen in 1759 with signal success.
3. The introduction of "Indian tactics" into the British Army in America, and the raising of "Rangers" or bodies of picked riflemen.

ORIGIN OF THE BRITISH LIGHT INFANTRY.

The first of these sources—the raising of Jägers—we must briefly enquire into; for it is to these lightly-equipped huntsmen of Austria, and later on of Germany also, that we can trace much of the training and many of the customs of the British Light Infantry of the Peninsular War. The second we may pass by, as the systems of de Broglie, and later on, of Mesnil Durand, scarcely affect the British Army during the period with which we deal. But the third we must enter into fully, for to it we may directly trace that system of irregular warfare, which, leavening the formal tactics of Frederick, produced the basis upon which the various systems of training in the British Army have rested throughout the last hundred years.

During the War of the Austrian Succession, 1741-43, Frederick put to the test the magnificently drilled army bequeathed to him by his father, King Frederick William of Prussia, and at Molwitz, 1741, completely defeated the Austrian Army. Not content with drill and discipline alone, he introduced a simple system of tactics, which constituted the company as the tactical unit for all movements. It must be remembered

that at this time the company system, which had been introduced by Maurice of Nassau and Gustavus Adolphus, had ceased to exist on account of the craving to increase indefinitely the fire commands, and so obtain immediate and ponderous discharges of lead.

The Prussian organization having become pliable, on account of these subdivisions, Frederick the Great now introduced a system of tactics whereby, whilst his enemies standing on the defensive or approaching him in line were unable to change front with any semblance of rapidity, he could rapidly close his well-jointed Army from line to column, march it towards one of the hostile flanks, open it from column into line, and attack obliquely against the enemy's front and flank.

At Kolin, 1757, however, Frederick, whilst attempting this now stereotyped manœuvre, met with an unlooked for obstruction. Whilst manœuvring under the enemy's eyes, the right flanks of his columns had to pass by several villages, which were held by newly raised Jägers or Austrian riflemen, supported by infantry of the line and artillery. Such a galling fire was brought to bear against Frederick's right flank, that his troops piecemeal formed front to the fire, and as this took place before they had reached their oblique position of attack, the whole plan collapsed, and the result was that Frederick was defeated with the loss of 14,000 men and 43 guns.

During this war the Austrians further increased their light troops by raising bands of men from the less civilized races of their Empire, which were called *Freischarren* or "free hordes"; and these caused the Prussians such losses and annoyance, that more to prevent the losses of his highly-drilled troops, whom he could not rapidly replace, than to aid their attack, Frederick himself raised similar bands from Austrian deserters, smugglers, and the wild spirits from among his own people,¹ and from these bands he formed a light infantry screen or stop butt to cover his valuable troops, whilst they were carrying out his favourite oblique advance. Frederick the Great also raised Jägers or huntsmen, who were armed with the more accurate sporting rifle and carried the bugle-horn.

All these light troops were virtually sharp-shooters, and they were not used as the forerunners of the decisive attack, but simply in order to annoy and snipe the enemy on every possible occasion, or to act as a manœuvre screen to cover the regular infantry's advance. They were not light infantry as Hannibal knew them, or as Sir John Moore was to understand them, *viz.*, a highly trained body of troops, but mere independent riflemen, similar to the hillmen of the North-West Frontier of India, or to the Boers of the South African veldt. But they possessed the essential virtues of light troops, they were good shots, agile, intelligent and self-reliant, and when later these corps of Jägers

¹ Organization, p. 189. Col. H. Foster.

were combined with the troops of the line, we find reviving once again the ancient glories of the art of war.

In 1759, the French formed special corps of Chasseurs, and at about this time, too, the English began to raise a species of light infantry out of some of their newly-created Highland regiments.

THE AMERICAN WARS.

In 1754 the French in Canada attempted to secure the Mississippi valley as an outlet for their trade, and commenced erecting forts on the Ohio river; a colonial war ensued in which Washington's name for the first time becomes prominent, and to complete which the Duke of Cumberland despatched General Braddock from England to take Fort Duquesne.

The Duke of Cumberland's conception of the ideal soldier was entirely based on the German model of drill, discipline and no initiative, and the carrying out to a nicety the rules and regulations of the academical tactics now the military fashion in all the armies of Europe.

General Braddock's advance in 1755 to the Monongahela River, though of no great importance in the history of war, is exceptionally interesting from the point of view of light and heavy infantry tactics when opposed to one another; and the battle which was fought shows how utterly useless it was for even the bravest of men to hope to advance successfully, in dense and heavy formations, against agile and skilful sharp-shooters, who depended on themselves as well as on each other, and who were as skilful with their rifles as in their extraordinary use of cover.

During their pioneer work in Canada, the French constantly allied themselves with the various Indian tribes, the braves of which were natural adepts in the art of ambushes and concealment. But their best fighters were their half-breed settlers, who combined courage and determination with the cunning and agility of the redskin.

The battle of Monongahela River was fought on June 9, 1755, between a French force of 36 French officers, 72 Regular soldiers, 146 Canadians, and 647 Indians, or in all of 901 officers and men under Captain Beaujeu, and 1,459 officers, N.C.O.'s and men, Regulars and provincials, under General Braddock.

Beaujeu's tactics were essentially offensive, but he took no care to throw out scouts to protect his advance. General Braddock was most careful, he carried out all the rules of the books to the letter. As an advanced point, he sent forward his guides and the Virginian Light Horse; these were followed by 100 soldiers under Lieut.-Colonel Gage as vanguard, and a large body of axemen, for the country through which he marched was virgin forest; behind these came two cannon with tumbrils and tool wagons, and lastly a rear party. Flanking parties were thrown out on both sides of the track. The main body followed in rear observing similar precautions against surprise.

Gage had just passed a small ravine, which the head of the vanguard was about to enter, when he saw a man dressed like an Indian, but wearing the gorget of an officer, bounding forward along the path. The horseman suddenly stopped and waved his hat. In a minute the forest began to swarm with French and savages. They yelled a war whoop, and spreading themselves to right and left opened a sharp fire, under cover of the trees. Gage wheeled his column into line, and fired several volleys against his now invisible assailants. Few of them were hurt, the trees caught the shot, but the noise was deafening under the dense arches of the forest. The greater part of the Canadians, to borrow the words of Dumas (Beaujeu's second in command), fled shamefully, crying, "*Sauve qui peut!*" Volley followed volley, and at the third Beaujeu dropped dead.

The English moved forward shouting, "God save the King," and Dumas, now in chief command, thought that all was lost; but the French officers rallied their men, and while Dumas and the few Regulars left held the track, his savage allies, shrieking their war cries, swarmed through the forest along both flanks of the English, hid behind trees, bushes, and fallen trunks, or crouching in gullies and ravines, opened a deadly fire on the helpless soldiery, who, themselves completely visible, could see no enemy, and wasted volley after volley on the impassive trees. The invisible death was everywhere, in front, flank, and rear. The British cheer was heard no more. The troops broke their ranks, and huddled together in a bewildered mass, were cut down by scores.

Braddock now arrived with 400 men from the main body, but the troops of Gage falling back on him caused terrible confusion. Meanwhile the pelting hail of lead continued, the smoke hung in clouds among the branches, but no foe could be seen. Both men and officers were new to this blind and frightful warfare of the savage in his native woods.

The Virginians alone were equal to the emergency. Fighting behind trees like the Indians themselves, they might have held the enemy in check till order could be restored, had not Braddock, furious at a proceeding that shocked all his ideas of courage and discipline, ordered them with oaths to form into line. Some of the Regulars had also tried, in their clumsy way, to fight behind the trees; but Braddock beat them with his sword, and compelled them to stand with the rest, an open mark for the Indians to aim at. The panic increased. So it got worse and worse, the artillery doing great damage to the trees, and little to the enemy, the soldiers loading and firing mechanically into the air at times, and often into their comrades, many of whom were killed. The roar of the cannon and muskets, added to the yells from the throats of 600 unseen savages, combined to form a "chaos of anguish and terror scarcely paralleled even in Indian warfare." Braddock was everywhere, storming and cheering like one demented. He had

four horses shot under him. Eventually he ordered a retreat; the soldiers broke and fled helter skelter, leaving everything—wounded comrades, baggage, cannon—all to the Indians. Braddock himself was now shot down and carried off by a few devoted followers. The Indians scalped and looted, and burnt their prisoners alive; the French had had enough and retired.

The losses of the contending parties are instructive: the English lost 63 officers out of 86, and 914 men out of 1,373. The French had three officers killed and four wounded. The Canadians suffered five casualties and the Indians 27. A French force of 900 irregulars, using Indian tactics, had beaten an English column 1,450 strong, using the tactics of Frederick the Great. The French, who made every use of cover, lost less than 5 per cent. of their force; whilst the English, who did not, lost 73 per cent. of their officers, and 66 per cent. of their men.¹

Braddock was not an incapable officer as most historians paint him. He had taken every precaution against surprise; his only fault was that he attempted to carry out a system of tactics which 99 out of every 100 officers in Europe considered the *ne plus ultra* of perfection. If Frederick the Great had been in command of this British column himself, he could not have done more than Braddock did, and he would have suffered a similar fate. Braddock seems to have realized his mistake, for on July 11, just before he died, he pathetically muttered: "Another time we shall know better how to deal with them." His words were prophetic, for a few years later saw the arrival of Howe and Wolfe, who, abandoning much that was useless, replaced the heavy line formations by active skirmishers, and these very soon learnt to beat the French at their own game.

In 1757 Lord Howe arrived in America with his regiment, the 55th. Being a practical man, he at once set himself to learn the art of forest warfare first hand, and to do so he chose as his instructor Robert Rogers, the famous leader of the Provincial Irregulars, who were also known as "Rangers." Howe, Fortescue tells us, threw off all the training of the barrack yard, joined the irregulars in their scouting parties, and shared their hardships, adopted their dress, and became one of themselves. Having thoroughly schooled himself, he then proceeded to teach his men. He cut the skirts off their coats, and the hair off their heads, browned the barrels of their muskets, gave them leggings, and filled their knapsacks with 30 pounds of meal. In a word, he headed a reaction against the stiff, impractical school of Prussia, so much favoured by Cumberland, and set up in its place a training based on experience. Such ideas had already occurred to others besides Lord Howe. Colonel Bouquet, of the 60th, wished to dress his men like Indians,

¹ Condensed from the accounts as given by Lieut.-Colonel Heneker in *Bush Warfare*, pp. 47-53, and Fortescue in *History of the British Army*, pp. 280-285. See also Malleeson's *Ambushes and Surprises*, Chapter VI.

Washington also wished to do the same, and Brigadier Forbes cordially agreed with him and had written emphatically: "We must learn the art of war from the Indians." There was, in fact, a general revolt of all practical men against powder and pipe clay for bush fighting, and Howe was fortunately in a position to turn it to account.¹

In 1758, probably due to Lord Howe's influence, was formed the 80th Regiment. It was known as Gage's Light Infantry, and was designed for the purpose of scouting and skirmishing.²

On July 6th, 1758, Lord Howe was killed on Abercromby's fatal march to Ticonderoga.

In June, 1758, General Wolfe brigaded five companies of Grenadiers and picked out a body of 550 marksmen from different regiments, who became known as the Light Infantry, and added to them a body of American Rangers.³ These he employed against the French with considerable success.

On September 13th, the following year, 1759, in Wolfe's famous and daring attack on Quebec, it was a party consisting of 24 men of the Light Infantry, some of whom may possibly have been men of the 43rd Foot, who under Colonel William Howe, brother of Lord Howe, first landed from the boats and crept up the 200 feet of cliff which separates the St. Lawrence from the Plains of Abraham. And it was only when the cheers of Howe's "forlorn hope" were heard, that Wolfe gave the signal for his men to swarm up the cliff and join their comrades, in what was destined to be one of the most far-reaching victories in British history.⁴

After the peace of 1763, all the light companies were reduced, partially to save expense, partially because it was considered that untrained men could be banded together at a moment's notice and dubbed light infantry, and more than partially because the military pedants in London, fattened on the stiff mechanical drill of Prussia, could not and would not bring themselves to believe, in spite of all the experiences of the late wars, that light troops were not only an aid, not only a necessity, but an integral part of all skilfully organized armies.

However, eleven years later, in 1774, mainly due to the efforts of General Howe, and partially perhaps because political mismanagement in our American Colonies had produced a state of affairs bordering on rebellion, a camp was formed by order of His Majesty King George III. at Salisbury, for the instruction of seven companies of light infantry in the manœuvres invented by General Howe. Nor was this precaution to train

¹ Condensed from Fortescue's *History of the British Army*. Vol. II., p. 329.

² Fortescue's *History of the British Army*. Vol. II., p. 332.

³ *Ibid.* Vol. II., p. 323.

⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. II., pp. 381-3.

a few men in the tactics, so essential to success in America, taken a moment too early, for within a year the skirmish at Lexington, 1775, was fought, and the battle of Bunker's Hill, 1775, won, after one severe repulse, due to the inability of General Gage, who, having much experience in light infantry fighting, should have known better; for in place of demoralizing the Americans in the same manner as he had seen Beaujeu demoralize the red coats of Braddock, he nevertheless attempted a frontal attack in place of a skirmish fight. At this battle light infantry were employed under General Howe, but only as infantry and not as skirmishers; yet it is interesting to note that at this battle, two regiments, which within 30 years were to be selected on account of the very qualities, which they, with the others, then lacked, fought side by side. These two regiments were the 43rd and the 52nd Foot.

In 1781 Yorktown capitulated, and the American Colonies, now the United States of America, the greatest colony any Empire has ever possessed, were lost, lost as much through the inability of the British generals to appreciate the elements of warfare, as through the want of skill which characterized our diplomacy at that period.

Nevertheless, some good grew out of a lot of ill, for though America was lost, the war remained, for years, more than a memory. It shook to the foundation the artificial principles of the Prussian tactics; it loosened the solid lines of British soldiery as well as the tactical ideas of the day; so that we find, from 1782 on, the question of the British soldier and his training occupying the attention of the military intellects at home. A revolution in war was taking place. A great Empire had been broken by an undisciplined handful of colonists, much as it was nearly broken a hundred and twenty years later by a similarly irregular body of Dutchmen. The Americans had been unfettered by tradition, they had relied on their rifles and muskets, on the ground, on their skill, and on their cunning and not on their rules and regulations. "Drill and discipline," writes Fortescue, "could make the British soldier stand and be killed; but they could not avail him to silence the unseen rifle which, safely ensconced beyond the range of his own musket, struck down first his officers, then his sergeants, and at last himself."¹

"The British, therefore, had no alternative but to learn from their enemies, to pit individual against individual, marksman against marksman, irregular fighting against irregular fighting. . . . The methods of their (American) irregular corps also were to a great extent forced upon the whole of the British troops, owing partly to the deadly marksmanship of the American riflemen, but still more to the fact that almost every important action of the war was fought on heavily wooded

¹ Fortescue's *History of the British Army*. Vol. III., p. 529.

ground. Thus the British infantry in the field in 1780 and 1781 had lost to a great measure, if not entirely, the solidity and precision which had distinguished it at Fontenoy and at Minden. The depth of the ranks had been reduced from three to two, the files had been opened, and all movements had been conducted loosely and irregularly, with an independence of action on the part of small units and of individuals which was wholly at variance with the received doctrines of Europe."¹

Nevertheless, there were many left, who refused to be convinced by experience, and chief among these was Colonel David Dundas, who was on the Headquarter Staff in Dublin.

Dundas, who was an ardent admirer of the Great Frederick, attended in 1785 the last manœuvres held by that old soldier, and was so struck with the shoulder to shoulder formations, the flexible columns, the deploying battalions, and the minute precision and accuracy of the whole Prussian Army, that in order to stimulate, or rather to resuscitate, ideas already growing out of fashion in England, he, four years later, in 1789, produced his *Principles of Military Movements*.

Cornwallis, fresh from America, was also present at these manœuvres, and it is interesting to compare the opinion of this experienced soldier, as set forth in his *Correspondence*,² to the opinions of Dundas the ultra peace theorist. Cornwallis writes:—

"Their manœuvres were such as the worst General in England would be hooted at for practising; two lines coming up within six yards of one another and firing until they had no ammunition left; nothing could be more ridiculous."

The *Principles of Military Movements* were very well received in London. The Duke of York approved of them; and in order to counteract the hostile criticisms of experienced soldiers, and also to introduce a fixed system of drill, for at present none existed in the British Army, Dundas received a royal command to embody his principles in a volume suitable as a text book for the British forces in England, India, and the Colonies. This he did, and in 1792 was published the first edition of *The Rules and Regulations*, which has formed the basis for all similar drill books since.

"There was, however, so much that was rigid, formal and unnecessary in Dundas's drill, that it gained for him the nickname of "Old Pivot"; while he also made the fatal mistake of distributing the whole science of military evolution into 18 manœuvres, which were a sad stumbling block to slow-witted officers. 'General,' said Sir John Moore to him in 1804, 'that book of yours has done a great deal of good, and would be of great value if it were not for those damned 18 manœuvres.'

¹ Fortescue's *History of the British Army*. Vol. III., pp. 529-30.

² Cornwallis. *Correspondence*. Vol. I., p. 212.

'Why—ay' answered Dundas slowly in broad Scots, 'blockheads don't understand.'"¹

In spite of Dundas and his Rules and Regulations, many real reforms took place. Troops were taught to attain a great speed in loading; an extra cartridge pouch was added to their equipment, and the light infantry were provided with cartridges. Badges² were also introduced in 1791, and the bugle-horn, as carried by the Hessian Jägers, was adopted as the distinguishing mark for light infantry, and "wings" were added to the light infantry officers' uniform in place of the usual shoulder knot.

Meanwhile, on the continent, and especially in France, revolution and universal brotherhood were rapidly degenerating into throat slitting and universal war, a war which was to last 23 years, and which was destined to revive in all its splendour the ancient light infantry tactics, which had helped to make Rome mistress of the Western World.

In 1791 Louis XVI. had given his consent to the publication of a Rules and Regulations for the French Army, and like those of Dundas, they were based on the Rules and Regulations of Frederick. In 1796, Buonaparte, saturated not only with the enthusiasm of the Revolution, which cast all rules and regulations aside, but also with the knowledge of the tactics of all the great soldiers of the past, startled Europe with the astonishing successes he was able to gain with an undrilled soldiery against the veteran line of Austria. And why? Because against their mechanical lines he employed small mobile columns preceded by agile and self-reliant skirmishers. The system that Mesnil Durand had advocated some years back, had now taken form, and at the Tagliamento, in 1797, we find it for the first time put into practice by Buonaparte in its entirety, and with startling success.

FORMATION OF THE 95th RIFLE REGIMENT.

The war with France, the trouble in Ireland, and possibly the successes of General Buonaparte in Italy, were the cause of General Viscount Howe, now an old man, once again bestirring himself; for in 1798 we find that a brigade was formed under him on the Essex coast, for instruction in light infantry drill. This brigade consisted of a detachment of Royal Artillery, two troops of light horse, and two light companies. In the same year was published, with the authority of the Adjutant-General, a translation of a German work on light infantry exercises. This work was entitled: Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen and Light Infantry, and Instructions for their Conduct in the Field, and it was recommended to the attention of all officers by the Commander-in-Chief.

¹ Fortescue's History of the British Army. Vol. III., p. 535.

² Ibid. Vol. III., p. 536.

In 1800, Sir John Moore,¹ shortly to become famous for his system of light infantry training, was serving under General Dundas in Corsica. Here he had the chance of watching and appreciating² the true value of light troops, for an effective body of Corsican Rangers had been raised by Captain Lowe, afterwards Sir Hudson Lowe, of St. Helena fame. In the Egyptian campaign these troops proved most useful to Sir John Moore. On July 14th, 1802, in a letter to General Brownrigg, Moore writes that this body of Corsicans was "better adapted to the service of light troops than any, I shall venture to say, that we shall have . . ." which only shows how completely, save for the efforts of General Howe, the experiences of the American war had, by the end of the century, been set aside, neglected, and forgotten.

The reason for this neglect, the same as we have seen had taken place after the close of the Seven Years' War, was that war experiences are seldom otherwise than transient unless systematized and reduced to a theory capable of general application, then printed by authority and circulated for all to study and mould themselves on. No such work as this can be traced in England prior to the Regulations for Riflemen, published in 1798.

On January 17th, 1800, when commanding a brigade at Chelmsford, Moore issued a circular to the commanding officers of 14 regiments to select one captain, one lieutenant, and one ensign, two sergeants, one corporal, and 30 privates each, for instruction in light infantry work. They were assembled at Horsham in March, 1800, and a camp was formed at Swanley for training. It lasted for about four months, during most of which time, however, Moore was away in the Mediterranean. In August, the same year, this camp was re-formed under Lieut.-Colonel Stewart, at Blatchington, for which Colonel Manningham drew up a series of Regulations for Riflemen. On Christmas Day, 1800, Charles Napier joined this camp.³

In 1802 Colonel Manningham and Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. William Stewart drew up a memorandum to Government, proposing a corps furnished with arms of precision, and pointing out the advantage of training such a corps in the duties of riflemen.⁴ It is said that this memorandum was referred to Sir John Moore. Whether this was so or not, it is known that on October 2nd, 1802, Moore sent Lieut.-Colonel Stewart a route for the "march of the 'rifle corps' under your command to Shorncliffe," and adds at the end of the letter, "I hope you will

¹ General Moore was made a K.B. in 1804.

² Moore had already seen much irregular fighting in St. Lucia and in Ireland.

³ The Diary of Sir John Moore. Major-General Sir J. F. Maurice. Vol. II., p. 65.

⁴ Ibid. Vol. II., p. 66.

find the station at Shorncliffe adapted both to your target practice and field movements.”¹

Early in 1803, Colonel Manningham delivered to the 95th a series of lectures on the duties of riflemen. These were afterwards published in book form; and in the same year appeared a second edition of Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen and Light Infantry, and also a work by Colonel von Ehwald, *A Treatise upon the Duties of Light Troops*. This work also was translated from the German, and, as we shall see presently, is of the very greatest interest.

SIR JOHN MOORE AND THE LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION.

“These were the circumstances,” writes General Maurice, “which had preceded the formation, under Moore, of the camp at Shorncliffe, which not only created the light infantry division of the Peninsular War, but was the introduction of a new form of discipline different altogether from that of the time, and destined, like many products of Moore’s mind, to be vindicated by the course of history, the very stars in their course fighting in its behalf.”²

It seems that Sir John Moore, ever since he had become acquainted with Capt. Lowe’s Corsican Light Infantry, had had it in mind to create a similar force in Great Britain; and having now raised the 95th Rifle Corps, under the able command of Colonel Coote Manningham, he cast about for other regiments to participate in his system of training, so that he might form a Brigade of light troops.

The 43rd and 52nd Foot had, we remember, distinguished themselves at Bunker’s Hill, and before this the 43rd had taken part in the capture of Quebec. Since these battles their light companies had been so excellently trained, that when, at the commencement of the last century, two more regiments were required to form Sir John Moore’s Brigade, these two were

¹ The Diary of Sir John Moore. Major-General Sir J. F. Maurice. Vol. II., p. 66. The following song at one time was very popular in the Rifle Brigade, in spite of its incorrectness in attributing its creation to General Dundas:—

“O! General Dundas he was the man,
He did invent a very good plan:
He formed a corps of riflemen,
To fight for England’s glory!
He dressed them all in jackets of green,
And placed them where they couldn’t be seen,
And put them in front, an invisible screen,
To fight for England’s glory!

Chorus—Repeat first four lines.

See The Rifle Brigade Chronicle, Vol. I.

² Ibid. Vol. II., p. 67.

selected to become regiments of light infantry. The 52nd being so created on January 18th, and the 43rd on July 17th, 1803.

Character of Sir John Moore.

Before attempting to recast the training as instituted by Sir John Moore at his Shorncliffe camp, it will be interesting to glance at the character and nature of this great soldier, for it, more than anything else, will help us to appreciate the system which he adopted.

Sir John Moore was the born soldier, as well as the technically made one. He had seen much service, but nevertheless he was always ready to learn, and so his life was spent among his troops. "His was the fire that warmed the coldest nature," writes Sir William Napier, "No man with a spark of enthusiasm could resist the influence of Moore's great aspirations, his fine presence, his ardent, penetrating genius."¹ "Neither in the society of his friends, at the council, on the parade, nor in the field, did he ever either aim at exhibition or stoop to disguise; he allowed himself to be seen as he was." He was familiarly acquainted with every branch of the art of war, "acquired by extensive reading, profound reflection, and constant practice."² From stories told of him, it is probably easier to get a glimpse of his cheerful nature than from perusing the criticisms of his admirers and friends. Sir Charles Napier tells the following two:—

"I recollect once standing in the street at Lisbon, looking at a very pretty woman who was at a window, when someone gently lay hold of both my ears, saying in a joking tone, 'Ah, caitiff! have I caught you? What right have you to look at such an ugly woman as that? I will put you under arrest.' Turning round, I saw it was the Commander-in-Chief. 'I will thank you for the punishment, Sir,' said I, 'if you will place the ugly old woman over me as sentry.' Another time, when going from his quarters in the village of Sandgate to the evening parade on the heights of Shorncliffe, the ascent being steep, Moore said to six or eight officers who were with him, 'Now for a race to the top of the hill,' and away we all started. Neil Campbell (afterwards with Napoleon at Elba) beat us all, and Moore was second."³

He was of an exceptionally kind and generous nature. On one occasion, when he heard that Lieutenant Charles Rowan was ordered to recruit men for rank, he wrote to Messrs. Cox, Greenwood & Cox, as follows:—

"Gentlemen,—It seems to me but a shabby proceeding in Government to oblige the first lieutenants of regiments to raise men for rank, as they are in general a class of officer without money. . . . Lieut.

¹ Life of Sir Charles Napier. Sir W. Napier. Vol. I., p. 58.

² The Diary of Sir John Moore. Maurice. Vol. II., p. 88.

³ Ibid. Vol. II., p. 90.

Charles Rowan, the eldest lieutenant of the 52nd Regiment, is exactly in this predicament, but as he is a good young man, and an attentive officer, the want of a few hundred pounds shall not make him lose his rank upon this occasion. I shall advance whatever is necessary to enable him to raise the 30 men required. I beg, therefore, that you will have the goodness to place to his credit three hundred pounds. . . . If this sum is not found sufficient, I shall order more to be lodged with you. . . ."¹

At time he could be dryly sarcastic. Moore was one day inspecting a worthy old colonel with a soul not above buttons. "Your men are clean—very clean," said Moore, and then, after a pause—"so are the Gosport Volunteers."²

Sir John Moore's first consideration, on his receiving official information that the 52nd was to be formed into a light corps, was to get rid of as many as possible of the officers and men who were unsuited to the new work, by posting them to the second battalion which was henceforth to constitute the 96th regiment of the line. As Commanding Officer he brought in Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie, of the 44th, who had served under him during the Egyptian campaign of 1800.

Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie at once applied himself to the development of the task in hand. According to the Royal Military Calendar of 1820,³ it was Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie, and not Sir John Moore, to whom credit is due for having introduced the system of a light drill; the Calendar further states that Sir John Moore at first only acquiesced with it reluctantly, but afterwards became so warm a supporter, that he had the 43rd and 95th Regiments moved to Shorncliffe to train with the 52nd. This is not correct, for the 95th was stationed at Shorncliffe prior to the arrival of the 52nd, the 43rd not being stationed there until 1804. The 95th, as we have already seen, was carrying out Colonel Manningham's system of training, which in all probability was based on The Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen, and on the united experiences of himself, Viscount Howe and Sir John Moore and the standard drill of General Dundas.

We know what was the system advocated by the Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen, but we do not know for certain what the systems of either Sir John Moore or of Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie actually were. Further, Napier does not inform us. He writes: "The details of Moore's system, from the setting up of a recruit to the movement of a brigade, you are well acquainted with; but though drill was an important part of the instruction, it was not, as you also know, by that alone the soldier was there (at Shorncliffe) formed. It was the internal and moral system, the constant superintendence of the officers,

¹ The Diary of Sir John Moore. Maurice. Vol. II., p. 80.

² Ibid. Vol. II., p. 91.

³ See the Oxfordshire Light Infantry Chronicle, 1896, pp. 300, 301.

the real government and responsibility of the captains, which carried the discipline to such perfection."¹ Discipline was the basis of Moore's system.

THE LIGHT INFANTRY LITERATURE OF 1803.

In the preface of Colonel von Ehwald's Treatise upon the Duties of Light Troops, we find the following:—" . . . The movements for light infantry, which the author recommends, are all to be found in the Rules and Regulations; and what is peculiar to riflemen, is more in detail in Colonel Rothemburg's work."

Now the Rules and Regulations are simply General Dundas's Manual for Infantry, and of its 377 pages, nine only are devoted to light infantry training.

The second work mentioned by Colonel von Ehwald, *viz.* : Colonel Rothemburg's work, we cannot trace by name. But by referring to Egerton's military catalogue of 1809, we find that by then eight distinct works had been published on the training of light infantry, the authorship of seven of which we can trace; but though the name of the author of the eighth, the Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen, etc., already mentioned, which was published in 1798 and 1803, and again in 1822, which shows that it must have been a well-known work, cannot be directly discovered, we may with some certainty hazard the conclusion that as both the Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen and Colonel Rothemburg's work were peculiar to riflemen, and that as the former work was translated from the German, and that Rothemburg is a German name, Colonel Rothemburg himself is none other than its author. Further, we shall find that Sir John Moore, on more than one occasion, mentions a work by a de Rottenburgh, which is evidently the above work, the author's name of which he would scarcely have misspelt had it appeared on the title page, which it does not.²

Whether Sir John Moore or Colonel M'Kenzie was the author of the system of training as carried out at Shorncliffe, matters very little; for it is not so much the originator as the system itself that we wish to discover.

In 1804 the Duke of York reviewed Sir John Moore's brigade at Shorncliffe, and Captain John Cross, 52nd Light Infantry, in the preface of his: *A System of Drill and Manceuvre as Practised in the 52nd Light Infantry Regiment*, states that

¹ The Diary of Sir John Moore. Maurice. Vol. II., p. 85.

² We, however, find a General de Rottenburg mentioned in a letter written by the father of Colonel Armine S. H. Mountain, dated from Stamford, October 4th, 1815. See *Memoirs and Letters of the late Colonel Armine S. H. Mountain, C.B.*, edited by Mrs. Armine S. H. Mountain, second edition, Longman Brown, 1858. In 1815 Colonel Mountain was serving as an ensign in the 96th Regiment, the old second battalion of the 52nd Regiment.

His Royal Highness expressed marked approbation of the system of drill then established in the 52nd, which was now for the first time published in 1823. If this system was well learnt in 1804, the probabilities are that it was practised and existed in 1803; and, if so, this may be the system of Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie, which the Royal Military Calendar of 1820 states eventually won Sir John Moore's marked approbation.

We know that Sir John Moore was in 1803 acquainted with Colonel Rothenburg's work, which we have identified with the Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen, for on September 4th of that year he wrote to Colonel Calvert, the Adjutant-General, as follows :—

"I received yesterday your letter with the bugle sounds of the light cavalry. As the light troops, cavalry and infantry, will frequently act together, there may be a propriety in their sounds being similar, as far as the two services will admit of. But all this I shall consider of in conjunction with the Commanding Officers of the light corps, and shall endeavour to make out what our experience points out as the best. The sounds¹ at present used by the 52nd and 95th are de Rottenburgh's, which are the sounds, I believe, most generally used by the light companies of regiments. Attention shall be paid, in whatever is proposed, to alter as little as possible. . . ."

In another letter, dated from Sandgate, August 30th, 1805, to Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie, Sir John Moore wrote :—

" . . . I have spoken to Stuart about some light practice for the 52nd.² One company is to fire ball at a target daily, and the company to be instructed as light troops. At this I shall be present. What is wanted at first is a method. Hitherto ball practice has been too desultory. I mean therefore to make de Rottenburgh the ground-work, noting in the margin whatever changes we make from him, but in reading over his book attentively, I perceive much good in it.

¹ The bugle sounds in Colonel Rothenburg's work are: To extend. To close. March. Skirmish. Fire. Cease firing. Retreat. Incline to the right. Incline to the left. Alarm. Halt. On discovering an enemy. The enemy is infantry. The enemy is cavalry. The enemy has both infantry and cavalry. Assembly of officers.

In Captain T. H. Cooper's *A Practical Guide for the Light Infantry Officer*, published in 1806, we find besides the above, the following calls: Shoulder arms. Order arms. Run. Lie down. Arise. Disperse. Form company. Form column. Form line. Form Indian files. Form two deep. Form sections. Form the square. Send out the advanced guard. Form the chain. Interrogative. Affirmative. Negative. Pursue the enemy. Call in the advanced guard. Call in the skirmishers. The charge. Rouse. Assemble. Preparative to parade. Adjutant's call for orders. Buglers' Call. Drill. Fatigue. Officers' dinner. Retreat. Tattoo. Second post. Third post. Setting the watch. Three Quick March. Two Slow March. In all, 53 calls.

² This implies clearly that until the present light infantry practices had not formed the chief part of the 52nd's training.

It only requires to be properly applied. At this I shall endeavour, and you shall know our progress. I shall take care that our other movement is not lost.¹ The afternoon shall always be close movement, besides occasional morning field-days; but really, after three years, we can defer no longer to try what can be done in the instruction of everything that can be expected from any kind of infantry. At present, if scattered, we should be very soon in confusion. . . ."²

This letter plainly shows that whatever the system originated, adopted, or developed by Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie may have been, it was not simply or chiefly a system of skirmishing, but a close order drill, probably a simplified Dundas, and if so, this is exactly what Captain Cross's work furnishes. Lesson III. of the Third Division of the book, was more than likely not in existence in 1804, as it deals almost exclusively with light infantry duties, which in the above letter, Sir John Moore openly states were not much practised. We may therefore take it, that this part of Cross's work was not added to his system of drill until after the experiences of the Peninsular War had been gained.

We know that Colonel Rothemburg's book was known to the 43rd Regiment, as we have in our possession the copy formerly belonging to Captain John Meyricke, of the 43rd. Also that von Ehwald's Treatise was known, for we also have Brig.-General Stewart's copy. This last-named officer commanded the 43rd in 1805.

THE SYSTEM OF SIR JOHN MOORE.

We now have sorted out sufficient data to partially reconstruct the systems employed by Sir John Moore in training his light troops at Shorncliffe. These we may class under three headings:—

- (1) Discipline.
- (2) Drill.
- (3) Training.

The first due almost entirely to Sir John Moore himself, with perhaps hints gathered from von Ehwald. The second to General Dundas and Captain Cross's 52nd Drill, possibly Colonel M'Kenzie's own adaptation of Dundas. The third to his own experiences in St. Lucia, Ireland, Corsica, and Egypt; possibly to General Howe and Colonel Manningham, and more particularly to Colonel Rothemburg and Colonel von Ehwald. Sir John Moore was also probably well acquainted with Colonel Jarry's and Baron Gross's works on light infantry.

¹ Possibly M'Kenzie's system, as set forth by Captain Cross, that is to say if this is M'Kenzie's. Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie was at this time ill and away from his regiment.

² The holograph of this letter and that of September 4th, 1803, are in the possession of the Revd. A. Fuller; these letters have been published in The Oxfordshire Light Infantry Chronicle of 1907.

(1) Discipline.

In a letter written by Moore on September 2nd, 1796, at Fort Charlotte, St. Lucia, to Sir Ralph Abercromby, we find the following :—" In short, General, excuse the pedantry of the expression, but with a Roman instead of a modern exercise and discipline the troops in the West Indies might, I am convinced, be kept healthy." He deprecates the lack of interest shown by all ranks in their work; and what he sees most clearly is, that it is not a new drill, but a new discipline that was needed to rejuvenate the British Army. There was too much drill already, initiative was cramped by drill, and the Army had become but a mechanical instrument in place of a living co-operative organism. Its discipline was based on flog and hang, and its drill on the theatrical movements of the Potsdam grenadiers.

Moore, discarding the gallows and the lash, based his system on the mutual respect of all ranks. His officers took a keen interest in the work and the lives of their men, or otherwise disappeared from his regiments, and the result was that the men responded to their interest with alacrity. They shared dangers, hardships, and pleasures together, and the result was mutual reliance, good comradeship, and esprit de corps.

Moore insisted that it was necessary to have the officers efficient before the men. He delegated full powers to officers commanding companies, and made them responsible for the discipline, drill, training, feeding and clothing of their men. He insisted that it was the officers' business to prevent rather than to punish crime, a system unheard of in those days. "The whole system was one of developing not of repressing intelligence, of making the development of the man contribute to the effective unity of the whole, of enlisting the zeal of the private as much as of the officer in perfecting the whole."¹

"What gives to this work of Moore's its chief interest," writes General Maurice, "is that it was he who at Shorncliffe worked out the very discipline to which breech-loader and quick-firing guns are now goading us, all unwillingly, by the experience of war after war, not for an exceptional selected corps, but for whole armies. I know nothing that so admirably sets forth the true resultant of the experience of the American Civil War, of the Franco-German War, and of the South African War, as Colonel Gawler's *The Essentials of Good Skirmishing*.² That book represents the working out of the Shorncliffe training during the unbroken experience of five years' campaigning."

(2) Drill.

Dundas's Rules and Regulations were the standing field exercises of the day. Moore considered them far too stiff and

¹ The Diary of Sir John Moore. Maurice. Vol. II., p. 83.

² This work was first published in 1837, and its principles are as sound to-day as then. It is interesting to note that they were adopted as the foundation of the resuscitated skirmishing in the infantry drill of 1896.

complex; nevertheless, we find that the greater part of Captain Cross's System of Drill is based upon them. This System of Drill is divided into four divisions. The first division is almost entirely taken out of Dundas, and deals with the elementary training of the recruit. A lesson on physical training (p. 3) is, however, inserted which is not to be found in Dundas, and great stress is laid on teaching the recruit how to balance himself when marching.

The ordinary time is, as in the Rules and Regulations, laid down at 75 paces to the minute.

"Instructors are on no account whatever to drill recruits without a pace stick, nor without having frequent recourse to the stop-watch or plummet; the vibrations of the latter should be marked occasionally by the tapping of a drum. . . ."

The quick march was 108 paces to the minute. In wheeling 120 paces were taken, and the double quick time numbered 150 paces.

The second division deals with the movements of squads, and enters very fully into file movement, many of which are not to be found in Dundas. These movements were much used by light infantry a hundred years ago. Wheeling also is dealt with, but not so fully as in Dundas, but one difficult wheel is, however, included, *viz.*: "Wheeling backwards in single rank." Wheeling on the centre of the squad, though found here, is not to be found in Dundas.

The third division deals with increasing and diminishing the front, and follows Dundas. It, however, explains what now is perhaps the commonest of all movements, *viz.*: forming fours from two ranks, which is not to be found in Dundas. The Fifelock and Manual Exercises differ slightly from both the regulation ones and those to be found in Colonel Rothenburg's book. Three deep and two deep fire formations are explained, which are followed by an explanation of the bugle sounds, and some excellent general remarks on skirmishers, the advanced guard, the rear guard, villages, woods, defiles, pickets, flags of truce, and night duties.

The fourth division deals with the formation of the battalion, and is a simplified edition of Dundas.

(3) Training.

Colonel Rothenburg was an officer of much military experience, and one can see this directly one reads his Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen. His book is, though short, a complete treatise on light infantry work; but as was the custom in those days, he looks upon the employment of light infantry almost exclusively from the defensive point of view—they form the screen and protective shield, and seldom the sword and spear of the Army. In this respect Colonel von Ewald is vastly superior to him, for again and again he proves the enormous offensive value of skilfully led light troops.

Colonel Rothenburg begins with the manual and firing exercises, and deals with extending and closing from and on the left, centre and right. Thus the whole of his preliminary training can be carried out in three simple lessons. (1) The manual exercise (to accustom the recruit to handle his arms smartly). (2) The firing exercise (to teach him how to shoot). (3) Extension (to teach him how to take up a skirmishing formation). These three learnt, three others, a little more advanced, follow: (1) Firing in extended order. (2) Firing advancing. (3) Firing retreating. Then follow three more: (1) Skirmishing. (2) The formation of the chain. (3) The formation of the advanced guard.

SKIRMISHING.—It must be remembered that in these days skirmishing was not as it is now, the advance of a line of men moving under the most distant control, but a drill, the success of which depended on accuracy of distance and interval. Colonel Rothenburg lays down that never more than half a body of riflemen must be sent forward to skirmish; the other half must remain formed and ready to support. The method of procedure is as follows. The right or left platoon (half-company) of each company moves briskly forward 50 paces. The right half of this platoon then halts, and the left moves on 60 more paces, and extends its files so as to completely cover the detachment.

During the advance the intervals are carefully preserved.

On the signal to retire the whole except the skirmishers face about and retire in ordinary time, paying the greatest attention to the preservation of distances.

At the signal to close, the right half platoon falls back on the left half, and then the whole of the right platoon on the left platoon.

On the alarm¹ being sounded "the skirmishers retire with the greatest celerity through their respective intervals in the battalion; in the rear of which they form and resume their several stations in the line; but the half platoons which were behind them will remain formed, and move with a firm and quick step into their proper places.

FORMATION OF THE CHAIN.—The chain was formed for scouring tracts of country and clearing wood enclosures, etc. Usually the chain was formed by three-quarters of the company extending in small groups of four men under a non-commissioned officer; one-half platoon being kept in rear as a support. When fire is opened, one man of each group fires at a time, and by this means a continuous fire is maintained.

THE FORMATION OF THE ADVANCED GUARD.—The company is told off into four half-platoons or sections. The first is thrown out in advance of the force it is protecting, by day 500 yards, and 300 yards by night. The second is detached 200 yards in

¹ The alarm preceded the preparation to attack or fire.

front of the first, and a party of six men and a sergeant is pushed out 100 yards further. The third and fourth sections are placed 300 yards to the right and left of the first, and send out 100 paces to their front and in an oblique direction to the outer flank, a non-commissioned officer and six men.

These movements and formations, seem all very simple to us now, but to appreciate their true value, it must be remembered, that in 1798 they were not included in Dundas, or in any other work which might be considered a military text-book. Even as late as the Crimea War the service of reconnaissance and the duties of protective guards were so little understood, that it was possible for two long columns of thousands of men each to move parallel, but in opposite directions to one another, quite unconscious of each other's presence, though separated by but four to five miles of country!

Part II. of Colonel Rothemburg's book deals with the protective services in the field; and enters very fully into the duties of patrols.

A patrol must always send one man ahead of it. If advancing in a country inclosed by hedges, flankers must be sent on each side of these. No patrol should return by the way it came; nor when attacked should it fall back directly on the main body, but obliquely, so that it may bring the pursuers under the main body's fire as well as its own. On approaching a village the patrol must conceal itself, send two or three men ahead, seize one of the inhabitants, and learn whether the village is occupied by the enemy or not; this done, another inhabitant should be seized and independently questioned, to see if his answer corroborates that of the first. If the village is found unheld, every avenue must be at once occupied, and a report sent back to the main body that all is clear. At night the scouts must creep gently along the fronts of the houses, "and particularly along those of the public-houses, looking at the same time in at the windows, and endeavouring to distinguish whether any of the enemy are within."

When the enemy is seen approaching, the patrol must conceal itself, for the object of a patrol is to reconnoitre and not to fight, "all engagements should be avoided." . . . "When a patrol is sent out, every sort of instruction . . . should be communicated to the men." From the moment of their departure until their return, all must be attentive, obedient, and vigilant. The men "must be forbidden to go into any public-house during the march: they should therefore be supplied with their complete ration of provisions." Bridges should be avoided as they favour ambushes. If a dangerous place has to be passed the patrol must split up and pass it by several routes, and then rendezvous on the other side of it. If the patrol is attacked by an equal or inferior number they should fight; if by a superior, each man must save himself; in such cases the rear man must never wait for those in advance, but must at once retire. The officer in charge of the patrol must

impress on the minds of his men the dangers to be expected, the roads open to retirement, the places of rendezvous, the position of the Army, all these and many other instructions "should be explained to the men in the clearest terms previous to the marching off and during the march of the patrol."

Chapter II. of Part II. deals fully with advanced guard duties. "No column, regiment, or detachment, whether it be near or at a distance from the enemy," writes Colonel Rothemburg, "marches without an advanced guard. . . ." The skirmishers of the advanced guard must examine closely all objects, must traverse all inclosures and the like. "Skirmishers must always be in parties of two men each, so that while one is employed in examining any object, the other may remain on the look out . . . or . . . the one may immediately make a report . . . while the other keeps his eye constantly on the object till the return of his comrade."

The distance of the advanced guard from the main body should be sufficiently great "that if they should be unexpectedly attacked, the column may have time to put itself in a posture of defence; and also, that if defiles, villages, or woods, present themselves . . . they may be thoroughly examined before the arrival of the head of the column, that there may be no delay. . . ."

Much more useful information is given as to the duties of advanced guards; which is followed by the duties of outposts. From the latter we will make but one quotation:—

"On picket and other duties, where the service is inseparable from the greatest hardships, it is the duty of every officer to set his men a good example, not to be laying down or resting himself when the men are under arms, nor to go under cover while they are without shelter, but share, in common with them, every danger and fatigue: by his example, soldiers will submit cheerfully, and without murmuring, to any inconvenience: it is also the best means of securing their attention and confidence."

Colonel von Ehwald's Treatise upon the Duties of Light Troops.

Where Colonel Rothemburg is the good soldier, Colonel von Ehwald is the genius; where the former writes an exercise, the latter produces a classical work on war. The very first sentence of his work shows his grasp of essentials. He writes: "In a military system where it is wished that light troops should be made less necessary, the only way would be to instruct the troops of the line to perform those particular duties. . . . Why should not the troops of the line be taught and practise the same duties, being (as they are) made up of the same sort of men, and clothed and armed alike? The difference of the name alone cannot constitute a different kind of troops."

The importance of von Ehwald's treatise lies in that it is based on hard-won experiences during six years of a most

difficult war in America, 1775-1781, and not on books and peace-made tactics. Further, that he never commanded more than 400 or 500 men, and therefore gained an insight into that method of fighting which may be called "the tactics of the regimental officer." And, as it is on the regimental officer that the brunt of the fighting falls, it is much more instructive for the regimental officer to study such a treatise as this, than for him to saturate himself with the works of von Clausewitz, General Hamley, and General Foch, and the many other excellent works which deal with armies in place of dealing with men.

To the leader of an army von Ehwald may be of little use, but to the regimental officer, who has to act on the spur of the moment, in place of pondering over maps and foolscap, we have yet to discover his equal as an instructor, in spite of the fact that his treatise was written well over a hundred years ago.

Colonel von Ehwald was a master of the tactics of stratagems, nevertheless, he not only shows cunning, but commonsense as well. He is bound by no rules, and only asks for skill, discipline and daring; and relies that these three will create their own rules and means instantaneously as occasion requires. Demoralize the enemy, annihilate him is the heart and soul of his doctrine. Follow him up, and if he retire, worry him to death if you cannot crush him. To let him escape "is indeed acting in a Christian-like manner," he writes, "but it is not doing justice to our King and country, for the principal duty of a general is to put an end to the war as soon as possible." (p. 232).

To carry out such tactics, ceaseless energy and an unflagging mobility are necessary. Therefore von Ehwald writes that all infantry should be not only infantry of the line, but also light infantry. An army should not only be capable of hugging an enemy like a bear, but of coursing him like a greyhound. Further, he writes: "Experience proves that an army provided with a sufficient body of these troops (light troops), under the command of able and enterprising leaders, enjoys perfect security in its camp, while another deficient in that respect is constantly alarmed and teased on every side, besieged in its own camp, and when on a march is perpetually harassed by the enemy." (p. 7). The Light Division, which during the Peninsular War was never once surprised, strikingly corroborates von Ehwald's experience.

Von Ehwald had not only served in light corps, but had helped to raise and recruit them, and his remarks on the type of officers and men must have been of particular interest to Sir John Moore, Lieut.-Colonel M'Kenzie, and others.

Officers must be of a moral character, not exhausted by vicious habits, lest they be unable to support the fatigues of war. An officer must be always vigilant and alert.

"The most imminent danger must never make the least impression on him; he must always remain cool and capable of profiting by

every circumstance or fault which the enemy may commit; what the General does upon a large scale, he must do upon a small one. . . ."¹ (p. 7).

The Commanding Officer can never be too strict; "he must from the first day . . . communicate his intentions to the officers" (p. 9), and must see that they implicitly obey his orders. He will give them to understand that the corps is their home, and that their duties are their pastime and amusement. He must act liberally with his officers as his circumstances admit; "he must invite them often to his table, to have opportunities to become acquainted with their disposition, and to gain their confidence; but he ought to behave with decorum, and avoid that familiarity which too much wine occasions." (p. 10).

As regards the non-commissioned officers, they should be young, active, brave, and trustworthy, "and none of those old, worn out, ill-behaved and ill-natured fellows, as is in general the case; because (when a light corps is in formation) the regiments of the line seize such opportunities to get rid of their worst men." (p. 10).

Recruits should be carefully selected, and should be picked out for their physical qualities, and not to swell the ranks. They should not be under 5 ft. 4 ins. in height, and in no case over 30 years old. Old soldiers should not be sought after. They perceive dangers quicker than the young. During his first experience of the American War, he writes:—

"My old soldiers were the first who perceived our situation, and I was forsaken by many of them, but the young lads stood by me in the innocence of their hearts, and to them I owed the preservation of myself and my party." (p. 12).

The discipline of all ranks von Ehwald insists upon as an essential to success. "There is nothing impossible!" he writes, "give your orders, support them with firmness, and you will see every obstacle vanish." (p. 35). As to punishments, he believed more in moral than physical ones. The best method of dealing with hardened sinners is, he writes:—

"To strip them naked to the shirt, shave their heads, and turn them out in the most shameful manner before the front of the whole corps; punishments of this sort make a deeper impression than the severest corporal ones." (p. 13).

¹ Colonel Gawler (52nd Light Infantry) makes the same remark in his *The Essentials of Good Skirmishing*. He says, ". . . Within certain limits he (the skirmisher) is his own general, and must think for himself."

Colonel von Ehwald was not a believer in promotion of officers by seniority in light corps. He writes (p. 261):—

"The roster according to seniority in a light corps in war time, where the unskilfulness or irresolution of an officer has so frequently occasioned the loss of the honour, liberty, and lives of so many men, has always appeared to me like the electing of a burgomaster in a free imperial city, where the municipality assembled round a table, and laid down their honourable heads and grey beards upon it; on the middle of the table was placed a louse, which louse, on marching into the beard of one of them, decided the election of the dignity of burgomaster."

But the true discipline he maintains is not based on punishment, but on skill, which creates self-reliance: "The soldier himself feels a certain confidence and pride from the consciousness of his skill," and is therefore "prepared for everything." (p. 33). This is the true basis of all discipline.

The offensive is the very spirit of von Ehwald's tactics, and though he deals lengthily with the protective services which formed such an important part of the duties of the light troops in his day, he never forgets that to hit out is to fight. Do not waste your time evolving plans of operations in your head, make your dispositions immediately, and charge the enemy resolutely, even if he be superior.

"For it is a general rule in war, that he who begins the attack, has already half the victory, and fortune generally favours the resolute and brave, and very often, indeed, the rash." (p. 123).

And then he adds, a remark on the essence of the light infantry fight:

"The riflemen must endeavour by their destructive fire to annoy and weaken the enemy on all sides from afar." (p. 124).

That is, they must produce that demoralization which renders the assault possible.

Never lose sight of your principal object, do not act contrary to your orders, do not be led astray by secondary issues, go straight for the main issue, and do not rest until you have conquered it. (p. 123). But do not be pedantic and small-minded; if in carrying out an order you find that circumstances have changed since it was given you, disobey it resolutely, if your wits tell you you are doing right, but, if you do so, take care to acquaint the issuer of the order with what you have done. (p. 142). Fear nothing.

"If you be frequently alarmed by the enemy, do not suffer it quietly, but alarm him still more frequently, in order to keep him in awe, and tire him out." (p. 146).

"Should you receive certain intelligence that the enemy intend a surprise upon your post, and be also assured of the road he will take, march at the same time by another road upon his own post, carry off all he may have left in it, observing to follow, on your return, the road by which the enemy went, and which, according to the principles of the art of war, he will not certainly take on his return. . . ." (p. 159).

"Whatever is unexpected strikes the mind with fear, and when you hazard most, most is to be gained. . . ." "The word surprisal, properly speaking, should not be known in war. . . . For to say an officer has been surprised, is the same as saying he has lost by his own negligence, ignorance, or obstinacy, the honour, liberty, or lives of himself and many men who were entrusted to him. . . ." (p. 190).

If surrounded or in a tight corner, listen to no representation, persevere in your resolution, for,

"A glorious death is certainly preferable to life at the price of ever so good a capitulation." (p.179). Recollect always the old saying, "He who never runs, can never be pursued." (p. 265).

From the offensive we will now turn to the protective services of light infantry, and here again von Ehwald is just as decisive. He is neither blinded by the attack nor is he enthralled by the defence, he sees all things clearly and in proportion. "Never think yourself fully secure" (p. 121), he writes. He tells a good story of how a Spanish officer, hearing that a French officer and 40 cavalry would enter a certain hollow way during the night-time, lay in wait for them. The French blundered into the trap and were cut down. The Spanish officer gave the French officer two cuts with his sabre, with this advice: "Learn your duty better for the future, and before you march your men through a country, examine it." (p. 54). Leave no cover unsearched either on the move or when at rest. When halted at once cover yourself with outposts, and post single sentries by day and double by night. (p. 169). Be doubly vigilant on rough windy nights, and make use of them to surprise the enemy's posts.

"A thick mist will favour your approach; and when hard rain and high wind drive in the faces of the sentries, they put down their heads, forget themselves often, and turn their backs to the rain and wind, by which you may easily steal to them, and stab them unawares. . . . In such weather you cannot visit your own posts too often." (p. 193). If you surprise the enemy's outposts, rush upon them "and endeavour to enter his camp at the same time with him." (p. 197).

Outpost work does not consist only in posting sentries, he writes, but also in sending out frequently patrols "towards the enemy in order to procure timely intelligence of his motions and approach." (p. 144). These patrols should move out at uncertain hours, and especially before daybreak. (p. 146). Further, in intersected country, von Ehwald lays down that in advance of the outpost line should be placed, along likely avenues of approach, small standing posts, whose duty it is to alarm the outposts themselves if an enemy approaches. He adds:—

"Supposing that it should occasion the loss of a man or two; so inconsiderable a loss is not adequate to the immense advantage which would result from this measure; and if the Jägers be properly trained, it will seldom happen." (p. 145).

It is interesting here to note that the necessity of these standing alarm posts is in several of the latest histories and text-books attributed to the cunning of the Japanese during their recent war of 1904-5!

Night-work receives very careful consideration by von Ehwald; he sees in it great possibilities for active, well-led troops. He insists absolutely on the offensive being assumed should the enemy be met unawares. (p. 50). On a night march

the advanced guard should be quite near, and preceded by an officer on foot some 50 paces ahead :—

"Everyone should march in the greatest silence, smoke no tobacco, and all those who are subject to coughs and colds must be left behind on such occasion. No horse must be taken that is accustomed to neigh." (p. 201).

Bayonets alone should be relied on, and the rifles of the advanced guard should not even be loaded. (p. 208).

If a panic occurs, whether by day or night, do not cry, Halt! Stand! but endeavour to reach the first fugitives and form them up, "which will be easily done as they see behind them many more for protection." (p. 266).

The whole of Colonel von Ehwald's book is replete with useful hints, stratagems, and experiences. "If your men go marauding," he writes, "catch them and thrash them in front of the inhabitants, by which you recommend yourself . . . and gain the attachment of the whole country." (p. 237).

If you desire to obtain food from the inhabitants, seize the most wealthy individuals and threaten to hang them unless bread and meat are at once forthcoming. (p. 122).

But should you wish to discover the condition of the roads, do not question the rich inhabitants, "for they will always represent the roads worse than they really are, in order to prevent a visit into their country." (p. 186).

THE RESULTS OF SIR JOHN MOORE'S TRAINING.

Such are the teachings of Colonel Rothemburg and Colonel von Ehwald, the work of the former we know Sir John Moore had studied, and of the latter we cannot doubt that he was also more than acquainted with.

Further, we cannot doubt that it was on the authority of these works, tempered by the insight, knowledge, and genius of Sir John Moore, that the 43rd and the 52nd rose from comparative obscurity, and with the 95th gained a position of unsurpassed fame in the annals of war.

"His materials," writes Sir William Napier, "were the 43rd, 52nd, and Rifle Regiments, and he so fashioned them, that afterwards, as the Light Division under Wellington, they were found to be soldiers unsurpassable, perhaps never equalled. . . ."

"... When the Light Division joined the Army at Talavera it had not been engaged with the enemy, while the Army it joined had been engaged on the Douro and the Tagus, yet was inferior in discipline for war, seeing that its pickets were often in scrapes, and at Talavera a brigade had been surprised. But the men of the Light Division, though new to war, were looked up to from the day of junction as the veterans of the Army! and by their discipline they sustained that character throughout the war, committing no blunders, and showing themselves the same orderly soldiers on the breach as in the line.

J. P. Hopkins."

"To this may be added that the Light Division, though always on the outposts, in most difficult situations, never lost any baggage, except on the retreat from Salamanca, when some French horsemen, pressing

the British cavalry in a wood, got into the rear of the division and cut off two mules!"¹

We may look in vain for a written system of the discipline that made the Light Division so famous; for no true system of discipline can be set forth between the covers of a book. It is the ceaseless minutiae of daily work, the continuous care and supervision by the officers, the willingness of the men, the interest in the work, the skill in its execution, the appreciation of its results, the continuous perfecting little by little, and above all the self-reliance and good comradeship of all ranks that go to build up discipline, esprit de corps, and efficiency; and not the rules of well-intentioned pedants and the regulations of learned doctrinaires.

The drill as employed by Sir John Moore was the drill of the day, modified, as we know, but still the drill of General Dundas. His training was his own, and an adaptation of the principles set forth by Colonels Rothemburg and von Ehwald. His discipline was the clear, crisp, healthy atmosphere which surrounded his work, and the work of his officers and men.

On the fifty-third anniversary of Waterloo, Colonel George Gawler (52nd Light Infantry), who had seen in the field between 1810 and 1815 the practical working of the Shorncliffe training, wrote as follows to his son:—

"This really wonderful, thoroughly fought-out battle, was won under God (by British sturdiness, no doubt), but under the drill system of Pliable Solidarity. Stiff Solidarity characterized the European Armies up to the French Revolution of 1792. Then the wild sans-culottes, the French, were obliged to assemble and adopted the system of *élan* with as little of the solidarity as they could do with. Then good commonsense heads in England devised, first under Sir John Moore at Shorncliffe, Pliable Solidarity. With this system the old Duke outmanœuvred every army opposed to him, and never lost a battle. To the very end of the day (Waterloo) we manœuvred by well-formed battalions, as smoothly and as rapidly as we should have done on Southsea Common. While from the beginning of the day French *élan*, like soda-water, had to be corked up in masses. The moment the density was rudely broken, all went off in smoke and confusion."²

To-day the discipline and training of Sir John Moore is not so much the discipline and training of every civilized army, as the ideal of military perfection to which these armies still hope some day to attain. Sir John Moore saw clearly what an army should be, and he set to work more than a hundred years before the formation of such an army was possible, to mould, in his light troops at Shorncliffe, the model whereby such an army might shape itself. As the creator of a new order, more so perhaps than as a leader of men, he stands forth before us one of the most remarkable men of the most stupendous epoch in European history.

¹ Life of Sir Charles Napier, 1857, Vol. I., p. 58, by Sir W. Napier.

² The Oxfordshire Light Infantry Chronicle, 1901, p. 162.