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Thursday, 26th November, 1895.

Field-Marshal THE VISCOUNT WORTLEY, K.P., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.,
 Commander-in-Chief, in the Chair.

THE TACTICAL TRAINING OF OFFICERS OF VOLUNTEERS.

*By Lieut.-Colonel E. J. A. BALFOUR,
 7th Middlesex Rifle Volunteers (London Scottish).*

THERE are, I imagine, very few soldiers left who would maintain that a theoretical, as well as a practical, knowledge of minor tactics is unnecessary for junior officers, and (I might add) even for non-commissioned officers. But while none now dares to argue directly against the importance of these requirements, many are found to cast ridicule on the efforts made to attain them. Old prejudices die hard. Thus one still sometimes hears it said in this connection, "What is the use of running before you can walk?" which, being interpreted, means that Volunteers should not concern themselves with tactics, until they have reached a very high standard of proficiency in barrack square drill.

To this I have two observations to make. Firstly, in no other walk of life, with which I am acquainted, is the teaching of the mechanism of a process divorced from the teaching of the application of that mechanism. You set a child to learn five-finger exercises and scales on the piano—that is the mechanism by which the child will be enabled to play a tune. But as soon as the merest rudiments of this mechanism are learnt you teach simultaneously an actual tune. You teach a child how to draw by making him copy certain lines, straight or curved. But side by side with that you give him the representation of some actual object to imitate. You teach a man the use of carving tools. But, at the same time, you teach him the application of these methods in an actual ornamental example. And similarly, I believe, in all actual branches of industry or art. Why, then, should we depart from this universal habit in military matters alone? The direct object of drill is to enable individuals and units to carry out tactical operations. The connection between drill and tactics should, therefore, by all analogy be established, and dwelt upon, from the very commencement. Smartness will not, in consequence, be lost, but intelligence and interest will be stimulated. Who has not observed how often a body of Volunteers, which is perfectly capable of executing a drill movement smartly and accurately in Hyde Park, will bungle that very movement if called upon to carry it out in the middle of a field day. The reason is not far to seek. We are still traditionally under the influence of the "walk before you can run" school. It regards drill purely as an end, not as a means, with the result that drill is still too much taught as if it were the final summit of efficiency. I do not wish

to be misunderstood. I am not an advocate for abating one jot of the most minute accuracy in drill which time will permit of being instilled into Volunteers. They require all that can be given them, and more also. But if more opportunities could be seized of giving such teaching in more direct relation to its tactical application, each lesson would bear better fruit.

But my second observation in reference to this "run before you walk" sarcasm goes deeper. It is a beautiful journalistic phrase, and saves a newspaper reporter a large amount of trouble. Thus, in the criticisms of the work of tactical societies one frequently finds it employed. "What is the use," they say, "of Volunteer colonels learning how to command mixed divisions, or of Volunteer captains practising the leading of brigades?" Now here is a fallacy to expose. I challenge any critic to point to a single instance in which Volunteer officers have been given commands so far above their rank. "But how about your kriegspiels and your war games in the open?" will at once be thrown in my face. "Have we not seen schemes and exercises involving army corps and divisions?" Certainly. But here is the very point of the fallacy. What the war game teaches, whether it be played on a map or in the open, is not the actual command of troops, but the tactical principles on which troops are commanded.

The difference may at first sight appear verbal and superficial. It is in reality vital. Let anyone who doubts this dip haphazard into any military history which gives an insight into *all* that a general and his staff have to do in war; or, better still, let him study such a book as Major Grierson's "Staff Duties in the Field"; and he will at once see that the lessons which war games, whether on maps or in the open, are intended to teach (or, indeed, are capable of teaching), involve but a fractional part of the duties which have to be carried out when the troops exist in the flesh, instead of in the imagination.

But I still seem to hear the "run before you can walk" critic ask, "What is the use of a Volunteer officer learning the principles on which the tactical handling of larger units than he is ever likely to command are based?" I will go the length of saying that the proper understanding of these principles is not only useful, but essential. When we read of a general being badly served, what does it mean? Not, as a rule, that his troops showed cowardice; not, as a rule, that their leaders showed ignorance in the handling of their commands; not, as a rule, that there was disobedience to orders. In nine cases out of ten it means that *somewhere* in that chain of responsibility, which connects the chief with the smallest unit commander, a situation arose requiring an independent decision, and that the individual responsible for arriving at that decision decided wrong. And if we take up a further link in the chain, we shall find that that individual decided wrong, not because he failed in any direct duty, but because he was incapable of putting himself mentally in the position of his chief—because, in other words, he could not correctly answer the question: "If my chief were here, seeing what I see, and knowing what I know, what would he order me to do?"—in fact,

because he was ignorant of the tactical principles being employed by the general in command for the large unit.

Military history abounds in instances where failure has followed ignorance, and success has been the reward of the knowledge of such tactical principles. Perhaps I may be allowed to recall one case, brought to our notice last year by Colonel Lonsdale Hale, in his lectures on the battle of Beaune-La-Rolande, since it struck me in a very special way at the time. A German captain, who held the south-western outskirts of the village, was under orders not to offer a prolonged resistance to the enemy. When the French attacked, it was evident to him that the situation then existing was not the same as that existing when the order was given. His training enabled him to see beyond the limits of his own command. He understood how his small unit was fitting into the larger mechanism. He deliberately disobeyed his order, and thereby contributed largely to the German success. But before he could venture to do such a thing, how certain must he have been that he was right! What risks he ran if he were wrong! To accept such responsibility a man must be steeped in the knowledge of the accepted principles of the conduct of units larger than his own.

But, indeed, the truth of my contention becomes obvious the moment one begins to consider such extended formations as those of advanced and rear guards, or outposts. How shall the commander of a piquet distribute and place his men intelligently, unless he is familiar with the whole science of outposts in their relation to the larger units? How shall the commander of a flanking party of an advanced guard act with the necessary mixture of boldness and caution unless he clearly realises the formations in which other portions of the advanced guard are moving? And, most prominently in the case of a rear guard, success will depend on its handling being subordinated to the necessities of the main body in retreat.

I fear that I may have dwelt too long on the necessity of junior officers studying tactics both theoretically and practically, and in combating reasoning, which perhaps has no weight with most of my audience. But, believe me, the prejudices that I am endeavouring to remove are still deep-rooted in the minds of a very large number of officers. If you were to obtain the candid opinion of many Regular, and of most Volunteer, officers, you would find that it was to the effect that tactics were necessary for generals and perhaps for colonels, but that drill was all that was required by captains and subalterns. And even those who would not venture to argue in favour of these prejudices, too often reveal in practice the fact that their perspective is bounded by their own command. I believe that if we were to analyse the causes of the mistakes made in manœuvres we should find that a good half arose from the fact that officers will not consider that they must not play a little isolated game by themselves, even if a pretty opportunity presents itself; but that they must in unforeseen circumstances subordinate their action entirely to the expressed intentions of the chief. They are pawns in a great game,

but they are pawns endowed with intelligence and initiative. And this intelligence and initiative must be exercised strictly in accordance with what writers used to call the "rules of war."

Since writing the above, I have come across a passage in one of the *Times* articles on the recent New Forest manœuvres, which puts part of my point so clearly that I venture to quote it.

Dealing with the question as to whether, in a particular circumstance, a certain artillery commander (Brigade Division) should have left his position against previous orders, the military correspondent says :—"Had the officer known the actual state of things on the ridge, he would probably have acted on his own initiative; but he did not know; and this is illustrative of a weak point in our battle-leading, displaying itself over and over again at field days. Officers in command of units temporarily inactive do not keep on the look-out for what is happening, except in their own immediate vicinity, and not always even there. They do not seem to concern themselves with the general course that matters are taking elsewhere, and consequently sometimes let slip a chance of contributing to success by taking the initiative. There is also sometimes manifested a want of co-operation amongst the arms, no one troubling himself to get information as to the purpose of his neighbour's movements, or to give his neighbour reasons for his own."

Having shown then, the necessity for Volunteer officers to master the principles which govern the tactical employment, not only of the units which they command, but also of units higher in the scale of importance, and of other arms than their own, it remains to deal with a system by which this result can best be obtained.

But at the very outset we are met by two serious difficulties, difficulties which unfortunately are inherent in the very essence of the Volunteer system as at present existing. Firstly, no complete tactical training can be given to officers (especially in minor tactics), without their actually handling men in tactical situations; and for this the "requirements for efficiency" furnish few, if any, opportunities. Secondly, to use Volunteer material for the purpose of the elementary instruction of officers in minor tactics, is to knock that material out of shape. If we cannot overcome these obstacles, we must turn them. It is, therefore, worth while to examine closely their nature and extent.

Volunteering is, in two respects, similar to the labours of the Israelites in their efforts to make bricks without straw. The clay we have of good quality and in sufficient abundance; but we lack time to harden it, and money to spend on the more modern appliances for its manufacture. With the financial side of the question I am not to-day concerned, I therefore, put that aside; but for the rest we all know what would be the result if a bricklayer's apprentice were to set himself to erect a structure of half-burnt bricks. Not only would that structure present all the failures of ignorance, but the bricks would be twisted out of shape, and would have to be re-moulded before they could again advance in the process of manufacture. This would not be a very serious evil if time were sufficient for the work. But when there is actually insufficient time

to teach all that must be learnt, to mould, as it were, the bricks into shape and to harden them in correct form, it is worse than folly to permit anything to be done which might interfere with the correct instruction of each individual. In other words, Volunteers should not be used as the material on which experiments in the *elementary* tactical instruction of their officers are to be practised. To lay down this rule is not to belittle the value either of Volunteers or their officers. On the contrary, it implies (what is the truth) that the opportunities which exist require most careful nursing. Indeed, the principle of this rule is already admitted in the instruction of Volunteer officers in drill. Who, in his senses, would expose Volunteers to the tender mercies of a young subaltern at the School of Instruction, in Wellington or Chelsea Barracks, even if time permitted? They would become hopelessly confused between right and wrong in a few hours. Whereas the hard Regular brick, moulded and baked by a long systematic course of drill, can stand without injury this (at times) somewhat startling experience. The first conclusion, then, that we must draw is this:—The *earlier* stages of the training of officers of Volunteers in tactics must be conducted either without men, or, if actual troops are employed, they must be beyond the reach of injury from the faults and blunders made by the student.

But, it may be said, why not obtain the desired result by insisting that all Volunteer officers should pass the examination in tactics laid down for their respective ranks? It is neither my desire, nor my intention, to minimise the value of these tactical examinations. I regard them, on the contrary, as not only valuable, but essential, especially, if I may say so without impertinence, in the more practical form which they have assumed under the more recent examiners. In the battalion which I have the honour to command it is expected that as soon as officers have passed through the school of instruction in drill they shall enter on a course of instruction leading up to the passing of the examination in tactics. But there is nothing to be lost, in fact, a great deal is to be gained, by clearly setting before ourselves the limitations of the value of this, and of all other methods of instruction. To what point of efficiency will it take the man of average intelligence and average imagination? Would a Volunteer brigadier be justified in selecting, for a special detached duty in the field, Captain X or Lieutenant Y, simply because he has a (t) opposite to his name in the Army List?

The answers to these questions require careful consideration. The subject of tactics is many sided. In its complete form it involves knowledge of map reading, ballistics, elementary woodcraft, a little astronomy, some engineering, a quantity of military statistics, field fortification—besides, of course, those dispositions of troops of the three arms, regarded as orthodox by consensus of experience in various typical circumstances. But, in addition to these matters, most of which can be, to a considerable extent at least, mastered by the study of books, other elements no less important are essential for the successful practice of tactical principles. The most important of these may, I think, be best grouped under a general heading of “sporting instinct.” I know of no

sport worthy of the name in which the science of tactics does not play an important part. And no one can be said to be a good sportsman until the application of the tactical principles of that sport has become largely instinctive. For these two reasons I have chosen the expression "sporting instinct." Now, whether it is cricket, football, or golf; hunting, shooting, or fishing; each sport in its own way is carried out on tactical principles, differing, it is true, in each instance, and in all instances differing widely from those of war. But there is one sport—that of deer-stalking (and, I suppose, also that of big game shooting generally)—with which the analogy runs more closely. Now would anyone in his senses select a man for the position of stalker on the ground that he was deeply and extensively versed in the literature of the subject? Of course not. But, granted a man of average intelligence and education, the fact that he has so mastered the theory of the sport will enable him to become a true expert in far less time than if his education in the art had been from the commencement empirical. Not only this however, he will, if endowed with a fair imagination, rapidly acquire the instinctive application of his book learning. As an illustration of my meaning let me take a particular case. Supposing I were to show a young officer, fresh from having added a (t) to his name in the Army List, his position on a large scale map, and were to ask him to show me how he would conduct a rear-guard action in certain defined circumstances, his answer would probably be generally sound, however much he might fail in detail. But supposing I were to say, "You are in command of a battalion, and receive the following order from the general in command of your brigade: 'After yesterday's defeat I am retiring on X; delay the enemy's advance for twenty-four hours,'" it is possible, I will even say in many cases likely, that he will not realise that he has to use his battalion as a rear-guard. Probably he would fight a pitched battle. And then, should I point out that he had not obeyed his instructions to act as a rear-guard, he would most likely say: "I was never told I was to be a rear-guard, but, of course, I know all about how to do that." But when he had several times undergone similar experiences, the connection between theory and practice would commence to be established in his mind. He would study the imaginary situation in all its bearings, and would soon learn to bring out of the storehouse of his mind the rules and maxims applicable to the occasion.

But I think we can go a step further in respect to the value of tactical examinations. One of their great advantages is that they force a man to master, and to commit to memory, a large quantity of important, but dry, matter, thus laying a foundation on which a superstructure can be raised by the future study of military histories. The human mind is only too prone to pick the plums out of all literary puddings. Examiners are the nurses who insist that the batter also shall be assimilated. It is a prominent fact in the modern history of English letters that each year brings out brilliant biographies of great leaders, histories of campaigns, monographs on special incidents, essays on the *rôles* of individual arms. But to be able to read these attractive works with due appreciation requires some apprenticeship. That apprenticeship is gained, to some

extent at least, by such a study of military text-books as is forced upon those who pass examinations, just as in the pursuit of any scientific subject all higher teaching is based on the assumption that the student is familiar with the rudiments of the science; just as in the reading of any history of any particular series of incidents in any epoch, a knowledge is assumed of the broad lines of contemporary events as bearing upon those incidents; so in tactics but little profit can be gained from the perusal even of such works as "Napier's Peninsular War," or "The Official Account of the Franco-German War," unless the reader is so familiar with principles that he can fit the facts in order into their places. This fitting of facts into their places implies the existence of a mental framework into which to fit them—a framework which, in my view, should be supplied by the text-book reading necessary for examination purposes.

I have passed aside from my general line of argument a little, in order to press this point, for I am anxious to persuade my brother Volunteer officers that if only they will master the rudiments of tactical science, they have a field of delightful literature before them, from which they can pick, in their leisure hours, flowers as attractive as they are instructive.

The first stage, then, is and must be, the passing of the Regular examination. The second stage in the course of a Volunteer officer should be the war game. I have already pointed out that the war game, or, as I should prefer to call it, the "map fight," forces each combatant to realise in an elementary way the relations between theory and practice. I do not propose to dwell further on that point, for I think that it is on all sides admitted. But in this connection two other points of great importance arise. The first is the clear understanding of the limits of the use (and, I may add, the misuse) of war games. The second is the means by which its advantages can be placed within the reach of all officers of Volunteers.

If any man believes that by practising the war game he is learning, in any complete manner, how to handle troops, he is, as I have already said, grievously in error. But the contempt which is so often poured upon it is, nevertheless, the fruit of misunderstanding, and, perhaps, also of injudicious praise by its advocates. There is no royal road to the knowledge of military art. But for all that no means by which assistance can be gained should be neglected. It is legitimate to take a short cut, when you know exactly the points at which your short cut leaves and rejoins the main road; and also the pitfalls that cross the path. The great thing, then, that the war game teaches is the broad application of the principles on which troops of all arms are moved. The amount of detail into which it may be possible for umpires to enter must depend on the scale of the map, the time available, and the size of forces engaged. Thus, in dealing with a division on the 6-inch map, it is sufficient to indicate the general line and limits of the outposts and their strength. In setting out a company on the 25-inch map the exact position of the groups, together with the detailed instructions for patrolling, can, in the corresponding instance, be given. In both cases, however, there is an

ultimate limit to the detail that can be entered into. It is, therefore, necessary to guard against what will be the natural assumption of almost every beginner, namely, to think that because he can put pieces on a map representing fairly their correct positions in the circumstances of the case, he has mastered the actual machinery by which tactical combinations are carried out.

Great emphasis is frequently laid on the teaching of "map reading," as a sort of by-product of the industry of war game. I do not wish to underrate its value. Anything which gives facility in map reading is of itself of great advantage. But sometimes it occurs that the war game, and especially the minor war game, teaches too much, in so far as it leads to a habit of determining the exact positions of units from the map alone. A corrective to this has been established in the case of the larger war game by the Home District Tactical Society, by arranging that war games which have been played on a map on one day shall be carried out by the same players on the actual ground on the following day. The results of the first experiments in this direction have proved that it was a necessary step in their system of teaching. But it should most certainly be applied in the case of the minor war game, where its necessity must be regarded as being even greater. With all this, however, the kind of map reading taught by war games is only partially the kind of map reading which is useful in the field. No ordinary officer can carry a set of 6-inch maps about his person, still less can he carry maps on a larger scale. In the present state of our Ordnance Surveys, therefore, the inch scale map is the only one practically available for use in the field. But the reading of the inch scale map is a very different art from the reading of the 6-inch or 25-inch map. Although the inch scale map is crowded with information, it will not yield it, except to those initiated into its ways. Indeed, unless one is very careful in the interpretation of its signs, one may be seriously misled in important matters. The practice of war game will not teach this kind of map reading, which necessarily comes at a later stage in the tactical course. I have dwelt upon this matter, because I think that there may be danger in attaching much importance to the remark frequently made, and true within narrow limits, that one of the great uses of the war game is the teaching of how to use maps.

Another essential vice of the exclusive use of map fighting, for teaching purposes, is the impossibility of preventing the combatants from knowing a great deal more of the dispositions of the troops (especially on their own sides) at any given moment than they could possibly know of the same troops in the field. This element of unreality is more important than one is at first apt to imagine. In fact, unless it is fully realised, it may lead to the acquirement of a very faulty system. Suppose, for instance, that the scheme of a fight involves a flank march, and that the senior player has deputed the command of the flank guard to one of his juniors. However fairly the game may be played, and whatever precautions the umpire staff may take, it is inevitable that the senior shall know whether his junior is carrying out his orders in the way he intended. But it is exactly at this point that confusion in real war is most likely to occur.

The General in command cannot know in the field whether his orders are being executed in the spirit in which he conceived them. And, consequently, he can neither correct errors of which he has no knowledge, nor guard against the results of the failure of a subordinate. Whereas on the map, however fair-minded a player may be, his movements and plans must perforce be affected by his knowledge of distant events, which would be hidden from him in reality.

Closely connected with this point is the tendency to acquire the habit of changing plans, and reversing orders. It is so easy to say that four pieces of lead shall be turned about and moved the other way. It is so difficult to make this change with the brigade, of which those four pieces are the symbols. Everyone who has been in the habit of watching closely the conduct of a war game must have been frequently struck with the free-and-easy manner in which, for instance, changes of front by troops in action, reinforcement of one flank by troops from another, and similar movements of great difficulty, are ordered and executed with mathematical precision. Nor is it possible to introduce nearly half the causes which in real business produce confusion and disaster. The blunders of gallopers, and the misunderstanding of verbal orders hurriedly given and received, are causes of failure of frequent occurrence, even in a sham fight. They have no representation on a map. But still more unreal does the war game seem, when one compares the personal condition of a leader in the field with his condition in front of a map. Worn with the fatigues inseparable from the conduct of a campaign, never certain that his information is either full or accurate, having to discount the chances of errors in all directions, his mind occupied with the administration of a vast and complicated machinery, a General in the field has to calmly and rapidly weigh chances and probabilities, and at a moment's notice to arrive at an irrevocable decision. How different is the case of a player sitting on a chair in front of a map! He thinks himself hardly treated when the umpire gives him but five minutes to decide on a course of action. Surely, unless such unrealities as these are guarded against, there is a likelihood of the unfortunate student suffering from the most serious misconceptions as to his own powers of commanding even a small body of troops in a tactical enterprise.

But the unrealities of the war game are not confined to matters personal to the players. All the troops engaged are ideal of their kind. The bits of lead have souls above cowardice; they combine the steadiness of the British veteran with the romantic *flair* of the French conscript. Over the most complicated and enclosed country they pass, it is true, at a reduced speed; but no obstacle throws them into even momentary confusion. In no forest, however thick the undergrowth, do they ever lose their bearings. For precision of drill, even in face of the enemy, they would satisfy the most exclusive advocate of practice in the barrack yard; and silence in the ranks is never broken.

Many pages might be written emphasising these and similar points. I think, however, that I have said enough to awaken attention to my two main contentions in respect to war game:—Firstly, that its utility is

limited broadly to the teaching of the application of tactical principles; secondly, that as soon as it is made to stretch beyond these limits there is serious danger of its teaching becoming absolutely misleading to the student. I am not advocating its abandonment; on the contrary, it is the second step in my proposed system. But it is only a step, and not a very long one.

Still, bearing in mind that our student is as yet unfit, from want of experience, to handle partially-trained troops in the field, the third stage of training must clearly be calculated to bring his knowledge to such a pitch that drill and tactics shall in the fourth and final stage become interwoven. The third stage teaches what dispositions and formations are required in the varying conditions of actual ground. The fourth stage will confer the power, by means of previous courses of drill, of executing those formations rapidly and without confusion. In other words, the third stage is to consist of what are usually termed "outdoor tactical exercises," or "war games in the open." The variety of these is so great, and the amount that, in proper hands, can be taught so extensive, that greater difficulty arises, than in the case of ordinary map fights, in defining where reality ends and unreality commences; in other words, where the experience is useful and constructive, or misleading and deceptive. But I think I should not be going too far in saying that almost everything can be practised except as directly affected by the following:—(1) *Personnel*, *moral*, and actual existence of troops; (2) the actual executive handling of men, horses, guns, stores, transport, etc.; (3) the actual execution of all kinds of field works; (4) the furnishing of actual supplies; (5) the working of the medical departments. If, as I shall hope to show, I am correct in this analysis, outdoor tactical exercises must in the future assume an even greater importance than is now given to them. Indeed, they will form the most important part (after drill has been mastered) of the course of training of a Volunteer officer. Let us, then, attempt to find any tactical exercise which cannot be advantageously practised by this method, subject always to these limitations. Those of us who had the good fortune of having been regular attendants at these exercises, as carried out under the officers who from time to time have given to the Home District Tactical Society the benefits of their knowledge, will find that there are but few branches of tactics that have not been to some extent practised on these occasions. One would naturally have thought, for instance, that "the battle" was the most impossible of all, as it is perhaps the most important. But subject to these five limitations both the attack and defence of selected positions by considerable forces of the three arms have been worked out without difficulty and in great detail. The positions and movements of every unit have been determined by subordinates in accordance with the general scheme, and the advantages and disadvantages in each case have been gone into by the officer who occupies the position of director of operations. In a similar way experience has proved that the actions between advanced and rear guards, reconnaissances in force, attack and defence of villages, outposts, and so on, are within the compass of the system. It is true

that one cannot loophole walls in peace-time, nor fell trees. But the student can endeavour, subject to correction, to fix the time and labour required for such works, as well as to indicate exactly how he would execute them. It is true that one cannot take possession of a village in the name of Her Majesty. But the student can schedule its accommodation according to the units to be billeted. It is true that one cannot bring up actual supplies. But the student can estimate the capacity of the neighbourhood for supplies and transport. In fact almost the only thing that cannot be done is the conduct of a secret patrol, for the simple reason that the line of observation that has to be eluded, and the information that has to be gained, exist only in the mind of the enemy.

The Volunteer officer who has passed through these three stages of training—namely (1) book reading, leading up to examination; (2) tactical exercises on maps; (3) tactical exercises on actual ground with imaginary forces—will, in my view, be now fit to handle troops in the field, provided he has concurrently mastered the science of drill. This latter provision is obvious; and I only mention it to guard against being thought to be arguing in favour of a purely theoretical course of training. But although a man may have mastered two branches of a subject, each thoroughly by itself, it requires further time to be able to gain the power of uniting instinctively his divided knowledge. He may, on the one hand, be steeped in the knowledge of practical tactics; he may, on the other hand, be a master of the art of handling bodies of men. But the chances are, that when first he tries to use the latter to carry out the former, he will be discouraged by finding that he falls below his accustomed standard in both. This with most men will be inevitable. But the discouragement will be only temporary, as, if he is really grounded in both these branches of military art, the power of automatically employing them in combination will be gained in due course.

Let me, however, add at this point that in this last stage I am entirely at one with those who would prevent us from running before we can walk. For now it is no longer the mere principles that are being taught, but the practice. And nothing is to be gained, while thoroughness will certainly be lost, by exercising any officer in commands more than one step above his actual rank.

I have now sketched the outlines of a course of tactical training as nearly suited as I can imagine any course to be to the existing constitution of the Volunteer force. But, before proceeding further, let me say that, although for the sake of clearness I have divided the course sharply into definite stages, in practice this sharp distinction is neither possible nor even desirable. I do not want to say to a subaltern you must not play the minor war game until you have passed the tactical examination; nor to a captain you must not command a piquet until you have placed imaginary lines of observation and resistance on actual ground. Partial failure to do either of these things, provided the faults are pointed out in a spirit of encouragement, will give a reality and meaning to the previous stage of training. But I do think it important that the general course of study should broadly follow the lines I have indicated.

Now at this point, even if most of my audience agree with me in theory, I feel sure that they are asking themselves how such a system is to be carried out in fact, and I think that two questions will arise in their minds: firstly, how are the learners to afford the time to be taught? secondly, whence are we to obtain the staff of teachers?

I have not the slightest inclination to minimise the difficulties which a very large number of Volunteer officers find in giving the necessary time to military studies and exercises. The calls of business, and family ties, leave in many cases but few hours of leisure in the week. Moreover, I know that anything approaching to any further compulsory sacrifices would tend to increase the dearth of officers. But, that there are any men who cannot find the time necessary to pass the present standard of examination, I do not believe. Difficulties will, of course, arise in the case of scattered battalions, from the fact that the study of text-books must, in most cases, be supplemented by direct teaching; and, unfortunately, the art of teaching, for examination purposes, is not a common gift. I would suggest, however, a partial remedy for this difficulty. Some, at any rate, of the district tactical societies have already organised classes for this purpose. These classes have proved to be of great value, indeed, have been conspicuously successful, in cases where the officers live within reach of the district centres. But why should not their action be extended to coaching by correspondence? Such a method of teaching is already employed by other educational bodies in some subjects, and that of tactics is one in which personal demonstration is less important than it is in cases where this method is already adopted. I throw this out as a suggestion to tactical societies, for I think it may be a means of widely extending their field of usefulness. It is not easy for metropolitan Volunteer officers to realise the sense of isolation in which the company officers of some country corps have to carry out their duties. What is needed is that they should be approached with a simple and economical scheme of instruction by correspondence. I am sure that there are hundreds of comparatively junior officers who would then gladly spend some of their winter evenings in such studies, if they felt confidence that they could thereby pass the examination successfully.

The second stage, that of the war game on the map, presents less difficulty in the matter of time, but far greater difficulty in the matter of teachers. If an officer attends half-a-dozen war games during the winter months, and really pays attention while he attends, it is in proportion about as much as this stage of training requires. For it is worth noting that the spectators of these map fights gain nearly, if not quite, as much instruction as the players. But it is clear that if the only opportunities afforded to officers were those under the district tactical societies' staffs, and if officers attended in anything approaching their full numbers, the crowd of spectators would render the conduct of the exercise quite impossible. And it is equally clear that, in the case of outlying companies of corps in country districts, officers could seldom, if ever, attend. These considerations point to the necessity of decentralisation, at least in the case of the minor war game. And this leads up immediately to a point

on which I have always felt strongly—namely, that the true functions of tactical societies are, firstly, to train Volunteer officers to be able to impart tactical instruction in their turn, and, secondly, to maintain a progressively high standard, both in the methods of teaching and in the substance of things taught.

Already in the metropolis, and in the large provincial towns, the work of tactical societies has borne fruit to an extent not generally fully realised. I should imagine that it was now the exception, rather than the rule, to find corps in London in which some winter evenings were not spent in minor tactical exercises on maps, usually under the direct supervision of one of the senior officers of the corps, perhaps assisted by an officer from some other corps, whose fount of experience has in any case been the Home District Tactical Society. What is required is that this should be pressed further, and that country societies should aim at the same result. Whether this can best be done by the staff of the society moving from one headquarters to another, or by officers attending in some central town, or by modifications and combinations of these methods, must be left in each case for local convenience to determine. The aim should be that in every battalion a staff of officers should be trained to be efficient instructors, umpires, and assistant umpires, who will in turn pass on their knowledge; and that these shall be kept up to the mark by a certain number of attendances at the local societies' own games, where the methods adopted, and the instruction given, are assumed to be of the best professional character. I know one very much scattered battalion in which this devolution is at work, and I see no reason why it should not extend throughout Great Britain.

All that has been said of the training of teachers for the minor war game applies fully in the case of the third stage of the tactical course, the stage of outdoor exercises with imaginary troops. If they can be trained in the one case, by an exactly analogous process they can be trained in the other. Indeed, I do not believe in anyone being a fit umpire and instructor in a fight on a map who is not also capable of directing similar practices in the open. Failing this, he will be certain to permit, or even to encourage, movements and formations which could have no counterpart in the field. The difficulty rather arises in finding suitable opportunities of imparting instruction. And to meet this difficulty I can contribute two practical suggestions. The first is the employment of Sunday afternoon walks (and, I might add, cycle rides) for tactical study. One often hears it remarked that the ordinary 'constitutional' is dull without an object. Here is an object, and a very interesting one, ready to hand. I think that the Commander-in-Chief somewhere makes a remark to the effect that whether walking, riding, driving, or travelling by train he has acquired a habit of considering the country through which he is passing from a tactical point of view. Indeed, most men will consider country as they pass through it from the point of view most in accordance with the bent of their minds. The artist studies the picturesque, the farmer observes the quality of the land, those who love hunting will see themselves in imagination riding across

country, the engineer will triumph over natural obstacles in his mind, and even the speculative builder will construct a phantasm of jerry-built houses, which are to bring him in 50 per cent. Why, then, should not students of tactics convert their constitutional walks, not merely into reconnaissances of ground, but into seriously worked-out tactical exercises? If, for instance, the captain of an outlying company in Blankshire would learn from attendance at his district tactical society's outdoor war games how these things can best be done, what interest he might add to the pursuit of Volunteering, not only in respect to himself, but in respect to his subalterns, and, finally, his non-commissioned officers and men!

The second practical suggestion I have to make consists in the setting of tactical problems to be worked out on actual bits of country, the problems to be worked out when the student has leisure, and the solutions noted in writing, accompanied, if necessary, by rough sketches. One great advantage of this system (which has been at work for three or four years in the London Scottish) is that the element of hurry is eliminated. The officers can visit the ground as often as they wish—the locality being chosen as conveniently as possible for this purpose—and they can by the study of text-books learn slowly and quietly to apply theory to practice. Of course, it is an essential feature of this proposal that sound and adequate criticisms of the solutions sent in should be furnished.

There remains, then, only the last and final stage of training, final at least as far as peace manœuvres can be final, the conduct of tactical exercises with actual troops. Such manœuvres on a large scale, under the command and supervision of Regular officers of high rank and wide experience, take place at brigade camps, at Aldershot and elsewhere. And I am but echoing the feeling of all Volunteer officers in expressing gratitude to those Regular officers for the great labour expended in arranging and carrying out these manœuvres, and for the valuable remarks which succeed them. But there is a point at which the utility of these manœuvres stops, or rather the point at which they commence is too far advanced—and necessarily so. It but seldom happens on these occasions that a junior officer is left, as he perforce might be left in war, to make his own dispositions on his own responsibility. The causes of this are obvious. On the one hand, commanding officers succumb to the irresistible temptation (I speak humbly) of taking their juniors' work out of their hands. On the other hand, the scale of operations is too large for it to be possible for the umpires either to observe fully, or to criticise completely, the smaller units. I, therefore, advocate most strongly the encouragement, in addition, of course, to the larger manœuvres, of small affairs, a company against a company. I have a profound belief that, granted a reasonable amount of knowledge, by far the most successful way of instilling into a young officer, not only further knowledge, but resource and the habit of accepting responsibility, is to thrust that responsibility upon him. This can only be done by letting him rise to success, or sink to failure, by carrying out a small

scheme against a real enemy in sole command from first to last. I do not suppose that any officer, whatever his service, will ever forget the thrill of wholesome excitement he experienced, when first detailed to carry out a detached duty without any possibility of being interfered with by a superior. It is within the reach of every commanding officer to give practical encouragement to such enthusiasm. And by doing so he will often be giving the first strong impulse in the direction of the serious study of the military art. But such small exercises are useless, or even worse than useless, without the proper provision of an umpire staff. In London there are many Regular officers willing to undertake, and of course capable of undertaking, these duties, and we owe them our best thanks: But both in London and in the country the Volunteer field officers, adjutants, and senior captains ought to be in a position to act as umpires, and to draw up instructive reports on the operations. Tactical societies should aim at obtaining this result.

In conclusion, I have but this to add. It was unavoidable in writing such a lecture as this that I should seem to regard myself as possessing both experience and knowledge of an advanced kind. Such in reality is far from my view. It is, in fact, in seeking how best I could gain such experience and knowledge that the ideas which I have embodied occurred to me. I could not possibly, in the time at my disposal, go into great detail. Nor shall I be found any way rigidly attached to the views I have expressed if a better course can be found. Indeed, my chief aim in bringing up this subject was the hope of raising a discussion, the outcome of which might be a real step forward towards attaining the object we all have at heart—the increased efficiency of the Volunteer force.

The CHAIRMAN: It is now my pleasing duty to invite a discussion upon the various points that have been so ably brought before us by the lecturer—a discussion to which he has referred in the concluding paragraph of his lecture.

Lieut.-Colonel LORD WANTAGE, V.C., K.C.B., Retired (late Scots Guards): My Lord Wolseley, I cheerfully respond to the invitation which you have issued. I rather gather that it is the wish of yourself and the other officers of the Regular Army who are here present that this discussion should emanate rather more from Volunteers than from those of the Regular Service who, no doubt, would be able to speak with more authority upon the questions of tactics. A great deal that Colonel Balfour has stated in his lecture commends itself exceedingly to me. I should have been rather glad if he had devoted a little more of the lecture to what he calls the last stage, viz., the practical manœuvres which take place under Regular officers at Aldershot; but I hope, as he has dealt more with the scientific matter which takes up the major part of his lecture, that on another occasion he may give us his experience of practical manœuvres under the guidance and tuition of the officers at Aldershot, and especially under the late commander, Sir Evelyn Wood, under whom I also, with Colonel Balfour, had the honour to serve. I would allude to a feeling which to a slight extent has struck me, that Volunteers may be startled on hearing this lecture and deterred from joining the Force, owing to the very serious studies which they will have to embark on in order to become acquainted with tactics. Now, there is one paragraph which I must say does seem to me to partake rather of a startling announcement. It is this, that the complete form of tactics comprises a knowledge of "map-reading, ballistics, elementary woodcraft,

a little astronomy, some engineering, a quantity of military statistics, field fortification, besides, of course, those dispositions of troops of the three arms, regarded as orthodox by consensus of experience in various typical circumstances." Colonel Balfour passes on very truly, and compares tactics to sport, with which I think he very properly and appropriately compares it. If I were allowed to give a rough definition of tactics, I should say that tactics are all those devices which a commander resorts to in order to harass his enemy, and, if possible, to kill him; and also those devices which, in the performance of his duty, he adopts in order to prevent his enemy harassing and killing him. That gives a general description of what I should call "tactics," and under that heading comes a very elementary part which is most necessary for Volunteers to study, viz., outpost duty, advanced guards, rear guards, etc., and those elementary portions of drill which are, for ninety-nine Volunteers out of a hundred, the most important to acquire. The fact is, while we are talking of very splendid acquirements under the heading of tactics, we must not forget the minor matters which are so very essential and necessary to learn, and I quite agree with Colonel Balfour when he says that these minor points must be studied, and studied over and over again until they become the mere A B C; and officers should get them by heart, so that if they are called upon to perform them they may do it by routine, and not have to exercise any thought or reflection. I have had the honour of being at the head of a brigade at Aldershot for some years. Naturally a General Commanding does not give much time to regiments going on outpost. On one occasion I was out with my brigade, and I was told by Sir Evelyn Wood to station outposts along an extended line in which some woods occurred. I had about three-quarters of an hour or less to do it in. I gave the word, and I was delighted to see the celerity with which the companies moved off to occupy a wood in the distance. I thought everything was going well, and was very pleased to think that the Volunteers would be approved of. When Sir Evelyn Wood had been round he came to me and said, "I am sorry to tell you two of your outposts were facing the wrong way." Now, doubtless the officers were so engaged in thinking how the sentries were to be placed, that they forgot the main thing they had to bear in mind, viz., where the enemy was likely to advance from. This is an instance of a brigade which had been practising for some time. But I should like to be allowed one comment on Aldershot field days, and it is this: that the General Commanding the field day should take what steps he thinks necessary to secure that all ranks should have a general knowledge of the plan of the day's operations. Strange as it may appear to some, it is nevertheless the fact that many in the ranks and others besides never know the plan of the battle or the supposed position of the enemy. My first experience of tactics was the year after the Duke of Wellington died, when Viscount Hardinge became Commander-in-Chief. The great Duke had been Commander-in-Chief for many years, and he stood so firmly on the rock that nobody could venture to approach him or suggest any change or improvement; but when he died, Lord Hardinge became Commander-in-Chief, and there was an outburst of military zeal and interest in matters connected with the profession. The camp of Chobham was formed, and shortly afterwards I remember being quartered at Chichester when we were called upon under the command of our Colonel to place some outposts on the Downs. I went out, and I remember cutting along as quickly as possible from bush to bush and placing a sentry at every ten yards along the sky line. When the Colonel said to me, "Why did you put them so very thick?" I replied very promptly, "Sir, it is night and there is a fog coming on." So I was supposed to have scored, and got out of my difficulty very well. Another subaltern, who was also with me, was asked what he would do in case he was called upon to fortify a farmhouse—how he would proceed? He immediately said he should enter the farmhouse, shut the doors, close the windows, and put up the shutters. "What next?" said the Colonel. "Oh," he said, "I

should await events." We came to the conclusion that these were rather the tactics of the ostrich, and that my friend was never likely to become a very great General; and he never did. I remember an officer was asked what he would do when one "G" sounded, or when there were three "G's" sounded. He replied that "really as he had no ear for music he could not possibly say." I listened to the concluding part, as indeed to the whole lecture, with very great interest. Colonel Balfour is recognised as one of those Colonels who is, I won't say a "progressive" Colonel, because that is a phrase which does not always commend itself to us, but a Colonel who will keep the Volunteers alive. I may call him "a keep-'em-alive Colonel," and that is really what we want. Officers must be constantly turning the attention of their men to professional questions, and what Colonel Balfour says is perfectly true, that by reading and studying text books the Volunteers will be introduced to most interesting literature. They will also have the pleasure of discussing tactics. It is a remarkable thing how much Volunteers now are in the habit of talking shop. With regard to the latter part of the lecture, I am entirely in accordance with the speaker, where he recognises the grateful way in which Volunteers regard the instruction they receive from officers of the Regular Army. It really is hardly necessary to say a word about that now, because it is so thoroughly recognised. There was, however, a time when that was not the case. There was a sort of stand-off feeling on the part of the Volunteers, perhaps also a similar feeling on the part of the Regulars. For a long time the Volunteers were groping about, and did not get the assistance which, for the last twenty years, they have had from their comrades in the army. Colonel Balfour says upon that, "I am but echoing the feeling of all Volunteer officers in expressing gratitude to these Regular officers for the great labour expended in arranging and carrying out these manœuvres, and for the valuable remarks which succeed them." Then he goes on to say—and in this I do not quite agree with him—"but there is a point at which the utility of these manœuvres, or rather the point at which they commence, is too far advanced, and necessarily so." I do not think it is possible that practical training can be too far advanced. Volunteers may not grasp it all, but they can grasp a great deal; but what Volunteers want on these occasions at these camps of instruction is to be told by the General what is in his mind, and what the idea of the operation of the day is. The General should tell it to the Brigadiers, the Brigadiers should tell it to the officers commanding the regiments, and so on to the men; and then, when everybody understands the scheme, it is astonishing how much it facilitates the tactics which are to follow. I have trespassed too long, and our time is very short, but I may thank Colonel Balfour for his lecture, which has been both interesting and instructive.

Lieut.-Colonel C. G. A. MAYHEW, retired pay (Brigade-Major, North Midland Volunteer Brigade): It is not my intention to criticise in any way Colonel Balfour's very admirable and instructive lecture, but rather to point out what we are doing in the country in the direction of some of the suggestions that he has made. I may mention that some years ago a tactical society was organised in the brigade to which I am attached, and the duty of secretary devolved upon myself. The brigade is composed of six battalions, which, with one exception, are scattered over a very wide area in three adjoining counties. After a series of lectures at convenient centres, an experimental class was formed in military topography entirely by correspondence. The officers only met once for practical instruction in field sketching. Those officers went up for the prescribed examination and they all passed. I may mention a fact in connection with that examination which was rather a curious one. One officer executed a sketch of such remarkable accuracy that the Military Education Department thought it proper to question me whether this sketch was not a tracing from the Ordnance map. The officer in question was an officer well known throughout the

Volunteer force, a man of the very highest integrity, occupying a very high position as a civilian in his own county, and therefore there was not the slightest doubt about the authenticity of the sketch. I merely mention that fact, not as any slur on the Department, but to show what a very high standard can be obtained by this system of instruction as proposed by Colonel Balfour. That experimental class was only the commencement of a series of other classes. In the first tactical class formed seven officers passed out of nine. In the next class five officers went up and all passed. In a field fortification class, three went up and two passed. At this present moment we have classes not only in tactics, but in field fortification, military law, and military topography, and they are all being conducted by correspondence. I am glad to say, that lately we have had immense help from General Wilkinson, if I may mention the fact, as I see him here. He was good enough to start what is now known as the North-Eastern District Tactical Society, somewhat on the lines of the Home District Tactical Society. It was necessary, on account of the immense area, to divide the district into divisions or sub-districts. Assistant instructors were appointed in various parts of this district. I think Colonel Balfour alluded to the financial part of the question, so that I had better mention the fact that a small subscription of a guinea was collected from each battalion, and these made the fund from which the expenses of umpires in various parts of the district were defrayed. One very important rule was passed the other day, and that was that a grant of 5s. should be allowed to every officer who passed the regular examinations, towards paying for the expenses of postage and books. Colonel Balfour, in his lecture, has alluded to the practical instruction of officers in tactics. There was a new departure last year, if I may so express it, through the kindness of the officers in command of two of the regimental districts; when out-post schemes were arranged in the vicinity of the dépôt barracks, they allowed a detachment of Regular infantry to be formed on the left of the line. The Volunteer officers and non-commissioned officers were taken on to the ground where this piquet of Regulars was posted. They went into all the details; they saw how the reliefs were told off, the patrols marched, and so on, and afterwards they continued the line and posted their own piquets and sentries. I have asked several officers who took part in the exercises questions about it, and they agree it was the best thing they ever did. With regard to out-door exercises generally, there is one little suggestion I would like to make, which was attempted last year, and I think it might be carried out with advantage in other places, that is, that the conductor of the operations should after the exercise write out all the orders which he thinks should have been given by each commander, and also a short *précis* of the reasons for those orders; and this should be distributed with a plan to everyone who took part in it. The practice of writing orders is one that I think should be practised. It is a very difficult matter for anyone to write orders suddenly in the field, particularly when they are not accustomed to it, at least I found it so myself, and I daresay others have found it difficult as well. When we had one of our out-door exercises this month at Hemsley, near York, we had the advantage of Colonel Smith as conductor of the operations. He made a suggestion, and though it was an after-dinner suggestion, I do not think it is any the worse for that—it was in my humble opinion a very useful one; it was this, that as these tactical societies are developing, and they are able to turn out officers of the very highest ability in tactical work, that one society should send a challenge to another society; that, say, the East Scotland or West Scotland Society should cross the Border and meet the Home District Society somewhere midway, and in mimic mortal combat should come to blows, and that an umpire should decide the result of the bloodless engagement. I think it is a suggestion that might be worth attending to. I should like, as one who comes from the Midlands, to thank Colonel Balfour very much for his excellent lecture. I think the interchange of ideas on these subjects is most important, and we can gain a great deal from meeting here to hear what is being done in London.

Major-General Sir FRANCIS GRENFELL (Inspector-General of Auxiliary Forces): I could not, charged as I am to a certain extent with the administration of the Force, sit still and not express my admiration at the able lecture which has been delivered. As regards the subject of the lecture, there can be no question as to the advantage or disadvantage of tactical training. I well remember when tactical training was first commenced in my regiment, and I recall the feeling of horror and dismay when one day before marching out we were told that the subaltern officers were to send in route maps, I had for a long time in my possession a map which one of those subaltern officers sent in. It consisted of a long yellow line like a serpent, and at short intervals were placed various public houses, their names being all carefully inscribed. There was a very curious hieroglyph up in the corner of this map, and underneath was written, "This is Mirshes." That was the first start in my regiment a great many years ago, and I cannot think of what is now going on in the army without contrasting those days with the present time. Lord Wolseley mentioned that ten minutes was enough for a sermon, and I am afraid my remarks may partake somewhat of the nature of a sermon, as I feel that I am obliged to give you a certain amount of remonstrance coupled with facts. When I heard that this lecture was about to be given, I asked an officer in the Military Education Department if he would be kind enough to come and see me at the War Office, as I was anxious to get some information as to what advantage the Volunteer officers had taken of the various tactical examinations which they were allowed to go up for. We were strongly pressed some years ago to give various rewards to officers for tactical examination, and I am sure it has been a great advantage to those who have passed; and we are now being pressed to continue those rewards for further examination in "C" and "D," but I must say I was rather surprised when I got the number of the T's extracted out of the Army List, to see the small number of officers who had taken advantage of this examination. In the Volunteer force, the establishment of officers is about 7,800, and we have now serving about 6,200 officers. I find this year that out of the whole of that Force, only twenty-seven officers and captains have been up for examination and twenty have passed; of the subalterns of whom there are 2,800, only seventy-one have gone up for the examination and forty-three have passed. I am speaking of the infantry. The artillery are somewhat better, they have passed a few more. In the "C" and "D" subjects, with regard to which we were pressed to give some distinguishing mark at the end of the name in the Army List, fifteen captains and field officers have been up this year, and fourteen subalterns; and going back, we find about the same ratio. Perhaps it is a little better this year than it has been for the last few years, but in the whole two-and-a-half years in which the officers have gone up for these various subjects, of captains 105 have passed, of subalterns only 213 have passed, and in "C" and "D" twenty-four have passed. We find the field officers and captains are the men who take most advantage of this tactical examination, and there are many officers who command regiments, who take every subject up themselves, in order to set a good example to their captains and subalterns; but we do think that, when these examinations are arranged and every encouragement given, more officers of the Volunteers should take advantage of them. An officer told me the other day in the North, that a Board assembled for the examination of Volunteer officers in tactical subjects. A certain number of officers had put their names down. The Board was sent to the garrison town and sat for the examination. After the first day, the Director of Military Education got a telegram from the Board to say, "We have sat all day; have had a most excellent luncheon; but no officers have appeared." On the next day the telegram stated that after waiting a second day they had gone home. I trust that after this lecture and taking into consideration the advantages which Colonel Balfour has pointed out to us of tactical training, that this may not recur. I venture to go off the track of tactical training for one moment, and to speak about the entire

training of officers of the Volunteer force, and I do so because some time ago I received a most interesting letter from Australia. General Hutton, a very pushing and able officer, has been for the last three years organising the forces in West Australia, and he writes to me as follows:—"Since my arrival here, I have initiated a system of annual field training for our partly-paid troops, whose organisation is practically identical with that of the Volunteers at home. The experiment has proved eminently successful, beyond my most sanguine hopes. Officers and men have entered into the spirit of the training, and it has had a most beneficial effect. It necessitates the company and regimental officers acquiring a good grasp of their duties: practically, for the drill and field work of their men; and, theoretically, for the lectures which they have to give in accordance with the syllabus. Non-commissioned officers and men are individualised by the system of training as given, the good being commended, the bad cautioned or discharged, and the deadhead is eliminated—that is, the man whose efficiency is equivocal is found out. At no time have, I believe, the regiments in this colony been so strong as they are at the present moment, nor has their instruction been so thorough, nor so many useless men got rid of." The syllabus provides for only four days' training in the year, the last day in minor tactics; and I am sure Lord Wolseley will tell you that no exercise in the army has improved our officers so much as our system of field training, which for some years now has been in practice. I do feel that we should not neglect drill and tactics. What we do want in the Volunteers is, more sympathy between the officers and men, and more association between the officers and their companies, and that instruction given by the younger officers of the squad—by the captains to their companies—which is so beneficial to all ranks. I am sure that if time could be spared (perhaps you may say it is impossible) fresh advantages would ensue, and, therefore, as I have got these papers, I wish to use this public occasion to say that if any tactical society, or individual officer of Volunteers, would like to look over the syllabus, and the manner in which it is carried out, I should be most happy to lend it. Lord Wantage has spoken of the commanding officer whom he calls the "Colonel keep-'em-alive." There is another commanding officer that, I fear, we want, and that is the "Colonel catch-'em-alive." We are 1,500 officers short in the Volunteers, and in the country we are told that the Volunteers do not care to spend too much time with their regiments, and if greater demands are made upon them they will get alarmed and will not join, or leave their regiments. I do not believe it; but I do believe that if more tactical exercises were promoted, and, if it were possible, company field training introduced, we should attract quite as many officers—and more than we do now—who would take a greater interest in their work; and eventually from this tactical and other training, enormous advantages to the officers and men of the Force would be derived.

Colonel H. BETHUNE PATTON (Commanding Severn Brigade): I have listened to the very able lecture which Colonel Balfour has been so good as to read to us here to-night, and I have also listened to the various remarks which have been made by the other officers who have followed him, notably by the Assistant-Adjutant-General of the Auxiliary forces. I may say I know it is a fact from my long connection with the Volunteer force—an experience extending over fourteen years, acquired by the command of a large battalion of 1,200 men, and six years in command of a brigade—I know as a positive fact that notwithstanding the shortcomings of officers who may not have passed in tactics and other military subjects, the Force is sound at the core, and that there is the most earnest wish on the part of officers to make themselves efficient and to become efficient leaders of the men they have the honour to command. But the difficulties that Volunteers meet with are these:—Many of us are detached in country places where we have not the advantages which they have in large towns. This great city we are now in has a General at its head who leads the Volunteers in the most energetic

manner. They all follow him to a man. They have advantages of coming in contact with the Regular troops, the Guards ; they have advantages of tactical war games and various other aids, which should place them far and away above the other Volunteers in the country. But what we are here, I imagine, to consider to-night is not what is applicable only to a few officers, but what is applicable to the whole Force. I perfectly agree with Colonel Balfour in thinking that tactical societies are springing up all over the country. I know in the Western District, to which I belong, there has been one at Bristol for some time past, and within the last fortnight one has been started at Cardiff and another at Exeter. This shows, as far as we are capable of acquiring knowledge, we are doing our best. But the difficulty at the present time with regard to the Volunteer officer is this : there is abundance of opportunity for obtaining theoretical knowledge. There is the school of instruction at Wellington Barracks and at Aldershot, where an officer can go for thirty days, that is to say if he can. But considering that our officers are professional men and have to live by their brains and industry, it is very difficult for them to get away for a continuous thirty days, and also to stand the expense, in order to take a certificate at the school of instruction. The officer loses professionally, he also loses pecuniarily, and then at the end of the time he has not gained very much tactical instruction. He has acquired an amount of drill which is most useful, and which I consider to be the foundation of all tactics, but he has not acquired from being drilled in a barrack square and with only some very few men that knowledge which I think is the point which we are met to consider to-night. Then they have the war game, and last of all the outdoor tactical exercises, and very useful and instructive they are. But, my lord, I would say this, what I think is the greatest necessity for the Volunteer force in the present day is that the senior officers of the Volunteer force should *all* be able to handle their men in the field, and at manœuvres in such a way as to be able to get on without their adjutants. This is what I want to see, an officer take his battalion in hand, receiving orders from the officer in command of the brigade, who will say, "Colonel, Major, or Captain So-and-so, do so-and-so ; assume battle formation, take up a certain position" ; and then I want to see him give his instructions to his subordinates, and see him do it himself. We have a large force of 230,000 men, but this country wants a guarantee that the officers, at any rate the senior officers, of that Force, shall be capable leaders of the magnificent men that they have the honour of commanding. I will only say this, that the Volunteers are what their officers make them ; furthermore I will say that the officers are *what their country makes them*. If the country refuses to spend any money at all upon our instruction, we may rack our brains with theoretical knowledge, we may read all the books ever written, we may learn how able Generals have commanded large armies, but still at the same time if you tell some senior officers to perform a simple manœuvre in the field, they show that more practical knowledge is needed and should be given them. I have racked my brains to try and find out how this object can possibly be obtained without cost to the State in money, and I must confess I have given it up. I have not been able to arrive at that happy state in which an officer could obtain what Sir Francis Grenfell said just now is the keystone of the whole of an officer's duty—the valuable information that he derives from field training. You cannot go in for field training without the men : you must have the men, or you cannot gain experience from field training. I have with me a small outline of a scheme which I admit at once would cost money, but if it commended itself to you, my lord, as one which would be likely to increase the tactical knowledge of the officers of 230,000 men, upon whom this country would in a great measure have to depend, I am not at all afraid that if you approve of it and the officers of the British Army approve of it, but that any Government would probably take it into consideration. The scheme I would suggest would be this :—In the first place I

would say you must have the men, and the question is, What men are you to have? I would have a *special service battalion* formed in any district, made up of companies each of non-commissioned officers and men of the Army Reserve, non-commissioned officers and men of the Militia, and non-commissioned officers and men of the Volunteer infantry who may offer their services for thirty days, being paid the same as the Line. *Staff*.—A special service commandant, that is to say, the most up-to-date officer that can be found, a man who knows thoroughly how to instruct and how to maintain discipline with a mixed force, such as that might be. An adjutant also equally efficient as himself who would be specially appointed, also sergeant-instructors would be selected and appointed as well. *Officers*.—Officers would be selected from the Volunteer force. They would receive no pay, but, in order to make two ends meet to a certain extent, I would grant a field allowance of 5s. per diem to officers of all ranks. *Period of Instruction*.—A roster should be kept of all officers desirous of joining the battalion for a ten days' course of instruction. Extra time granted if vacancies exist. *Standing Camp*.—The battalion to be placed under canvas at a time and place suitable for a standing camp of all arms of the Regular and Auxiliary forces. Manœuvres under the general officer commanding the district. *Field firing* should be carried out if possible with full strength, because I think it might give the Army Reserve men an opportunity of having a very valuable course of field firing whilst they are out for this duty. *Hasty Intrenchments*.—Instruction should be given if suitable ground can be procured in making hasty intrenchments, etc., an officer R.E. being attached for this purpose. *Naval co-operation*, if possible, because I think if in a large camp bordering on the sea-side, as many of our camps are, a sudden dash on a camp were made by the Navy, it would wake up the outposts and infuse fresh life into the Force. It would also impart a reality in attack and defence such as might take place in this country.

Colonel C. H. COLES (1st London Volunteer Artillery): I take it that the object of this discussion is to endeavour to ascertain how officers can best be trained to enable them to make successful dispositions of the *personnel* and material under their command in the presence of the enemy, and it must always be borne in mind that, whereas many officers have the leisure, and avail themselves of it, to study, and to undergo examinations, very many have not the time to do so, and these are the men that it is necessary to train in order to fit them for the specific duties they have undertaken to carry out. Speaking as a garrison gunner, I think a very great deal can be done in the instruction room with a blackboard and some chalk. Certain officers can be told off—as in the war game—to perform the various duties in the chain of command in coast defence. Qualified officers can act as umpires. A short scheme set and worked out by each officer, with the aid of certain arbitrary *data* put up on the blackboard. I am strongly in favour of "object lessons," and these supplemented by lecturettes and discussions, teach officers who have not the time to devote to hard reading a great deal of the theory of their duties. Passing on to the practical training, I must strongly urge the necessity of providing guns and mountings of the same description, as the men are called upon to man in the forts they are allotted to as much valuable time is consumed in teaching the drill of these guns which ought to have been learnt at their ordinary drill stations. The garrison gunner is fortunate in many cases in being able to carry out practice with some amount of reality. He fires at a moving target and uses the guns and range-firing instruments, and mans the fort under some of the conditions of service. One of the most difficult tasks is correct "observation of fire." This can be taught practically by making all officers not actually employed, note down their observations of each round, stating the estimated number of yards over or under, and comparing their reports with that of the range party afterwards. Nothing but practice will ever make a man a good observer over water. The relation of ground to tactics is

important, and the relation of the water area to coast-defence tactics is none the less so. Artillery officers must, therefore, study the water way in the vicinity of their forts, for a knowledge of this is of the greatest consequence in the tactical working of guns. Officers and men should be constantly manning the forts they will occupy in war-time, and opportunities given them to make themselves acquainted with the chain of command applicable to the locality in which they might find themselves, and to qualify themselves for the exercise of higher functions should the necessity arise, for I venture to say this is as important in the garrison artillery as in an infantry organisation. Opportunities should also be given to officers to study electric communications and position-finding instruments, when their fortress sections are unprovided with these, in order that they might have some knowledge of them if suddenly called upon to man a section where they are in use. I can conceive no greater advantage than the manning of a work in conjunction with the Regular troops, assigning to each the section they would man in war-time, and carrying out the operation under Service conditions as nearly as possible. Constant study, and as thorough a knowledge of his own duty as possible, must be the aim of every officer; otherwise, when the time comes, officers who do not act up to the responsibility of their position, will be set aside, and relegated to other duties where the requirements are nominal. The lecture is principally of an infantry nature, and far be it from me to detract from the great importance of that arm; but as commanding a regiment of artillery in the metropolis, I feel I cannot let slip the opportunity of the Commander-in-Chief being in the chair, to ask for the extension of his kindly and powerful sympathy to the arm to which I have the honour to belong. No one knows better than the Commander-in-Chief that the Regular artillery are not sufficiently numerous to man, in war-time, even a respectable percentage of the guns which are mounted for the defence of England; and that in the early and dangerous days of mobilisation the only possible reserve are the V.A., until the Militia arrive, which will take some days, and during this time the V.A. will stand in the front line of defence with the R.A. Is it not time that the tactical training of the garrison artillery should be taken in hand?

Major-General Lord METHUEN (Commanding Home District): I am in the unpleasant position of having had my best expressions made use of by either Lord Wantage or by Colonel Patton. As General of this district I think I cannot make it too clearly understood that there is a certain class of men like Colonel Balfour who would be a first class man at Oxford, and in whatever profession he moved would try at once, not ignoring details, to get to the top of the profession to which he belongs. There are a few others like Colonel Balfour in this district who study theory thoroughly, but wherever you are not in a large town the number must be very small indeed. It is not for the first class man at Oxford that we have to legislate, it is not for the man of Colonel Balfour's information that we have to devise rules for education; we have to think of the man who would simply pass his "little go" at Oxford; it is he who occupies the position of the large majority in the Volunteer force whom we have to teach. Colonel Balfour says we are accused of having instructed officers to run before they can walk. Why, gentlemen, there are many officers in the Volunteer force who cannot even walk. These are the men we want to get at. There are men who are not able from want of money to go to the schools of instruction or into camps; they ask for assistance of the authorities, and I, as the mouthpiece of those officers, say that if the authorities wish to have that education in the Volunteer force, which I contend is absolutely necessary, then let me see the Volunteer officer, whether he be at the school of instruction or whether he be in camp, at any rate placed, as far as money is concerned, on a level with the officer who belongs to the Militia force. Gentlemen, it is easy enough in a district like this or in Manchester or Birmingham to carry

out the programme so ably developed in the lecture of Colonel Balfour; but I contend, and I speak with the evidence of those who command some of the regimental districts in England, there are country districts where that is absolutely impossible. Money and time cannot be afforded by many a Volunteer officer in a country district to carry out the programme that is offered here by Colonel Balfour. But there are officers who, if they see the authorities giving them encouragement, giving them money to go to camps of instruction, transporting the mounted officer's horse free of expense when proceeding to a camp of instruction, then these officers will be able to gain instruction better than at present. We shall then, at any rate, be progressing one great step further towards our object, and we shall be offering to the officers of Volunteers the same facility for obtaining military instruction which is now given to officers in the Regular forces.

Mr. SPENCER WILKINSON: I hardly propose to follow the very interesting paper Colonel Balfour read to us, because I gather that on most of the questions as to the method by which Volunteer officers should be trained he is in substantial agreement with the views which, some of you will remember, I myself have more than once advocated. I rose to venture a suggestion in reply to something that fell from Sir Francis Grenfell. Sir Francis complained that the Volunteer officers did not in sufficient numbers present themselves for examination in tactics and the other subjects in which the examinations are now open to them. I am not sure whether it was possible from his statement to get quite a clear account of how the matter stands, because he merely quoted the numbers of those who in a given year had offered themselves for examination, and did not give us the total numbers out of the whole 6,000 who had already, or at some previous time, passed the examination, and I think if he had been able to give those figures—

Sir FRANCIS GRENFELL: Those are the figures for two-and-a-half years.

Colonel LONSDALE HALE: I took 100 battalions of infantry by chance last night from the list, and assumed that, as among the 2,000 officers there were 1,500 of them who had not a "t" of any kind against their name, three-fourths had not gone up for examination.

Mr. SPENCER WILKINSON: That is what my impression was, that about twenty five per cent. of the officers had offered themselves for examination. The suggestion I was going to make is this, not to examine quite so much. I daresay the suggestion coming from me will startle those who remember the part I took many years ago in urging that these examinations should be instituted, but some experience of the working of them and of the working of the tactical societies, and of the relation between that work and the practical work which the officer has to do, convinces me that an examination is a very poor substitute for the best way in which an officer will learn his work, that is, by direct instruction in his battalion, and that it would be a great advantage if there were a little more teaching and a little less examining; and that brings me to rather a delicate point, which I can only venture to touch because I am no longer myself an officer, but I will put it to those who have practical experience of the Volunteer force, whether what the Force wants is not a little less examining and a great deal more inspection, in the sense of the superior officer himself ascertaining how far the individual among his subordinates is qualified for the position which he holds. I believe upon that line you can get a great deal more in the way of practical result out of the officer than by any quantity of examining. It is quite true that if you have an examination on a given text-book, a certain number will read the text-book; but on the other hand, if you have in the district where those officers are a Brigadier or General, who says: "I expect the officers whom I shall inspect

each to be able to do certain things, to be able to handle their troops in a certain number of situations," if that practical test is one of the conditions which the officers must satisfy they will find out, text-book or no text-book, how to be able to do it, and their brother-officers will find out how to teach them. I do not believe, however, that you will get the full force out of that method unless it is accompanied by another principle, and one which, as you, my lord, occupy that chair to-day, I may perhaps mention, that is, that in any military system efficiency has to begin at the top; that therefore if you want the officers of a Volunteer battalion to learn their work as officers, the man who is responsible for their doing so is the commanding officer, and if you have not a competent good commanding officer, no amount of examinations and no other system will produce competence in the subordinate officers. Everyone who takes the Volunteer force seriously knows that this is the truth. We are too apt, in discussing these matters, to wander round the point. What the serious officers of the Volunteer force want to see is a system, which no doubt Sir Francis Grenfell might devise, by which those commanding officers, who are not the instructors and not the leaders of officers below them, should be landed in some position of distinction and responsibility. I believe the dearth of officers which is complained of can be remedied only by making the thing real, and if the junior man sees that certain gentlemen, who no doubt many years ago were very patriotic and very useful, but who have ceased to be the leaders, the teachers, the instructors, and the trainers of their battalions, are relegated to some other sphere of happiness there would, I am perfectly certain, be a sense among the junior men that the thing was real. There would be an inducement to work, and if it could be found possible to do a little less examining and talk, a little less about book-work, and to introduce a system by which the General should expect the officer to do tactical work practically, a system under which the officer would know that if he could not do this he would have to go, but that if he could there might be such a thing as promotion—a system, in short, of selection according to fitness—then, according to my conviction, the Volunteer force might be made what I am unable to see that it yet is, but what I hope that it will be—a real contribution to the defence of this country.

Colonel LONSDALE HALE, R.E. (Retired): I hope it will be clearly understood that the sole reason for my taking part in this discussion is a request made to me by the lecturer that I should do so, notwithstanding that he thinks there are certain differences in the opinions which he and I hold on the subject of this lecture; but, gentlemen, when his lordship entered this Institution just now, I was greeted by him with the words: "I hope you will speak. I always like to hear you speak when I am in the chair." Now, considering the difference in our positions, those words sound like a very great compliment, but I hardly took it in that sense; because I remember what took place the last time that I spoke before Lord Wolseley, and our opinions differed, and I know what my feelings were after Lord Wolseley had replied to me, and as I left the building I had a very warm sympathy with those unfortunate animals who are sometimes prepared for our delectation, namely, eels that have been skinned alive; but your lordship performed that operation in such a pleasant and genial way, that if you think it necessary to repeat it to-night I have not the slightest objection to being skinned alive at the end of my remarks. In what Colonel Balfour put forward there is nothing open to any objection, and a great deal to approve of; but he does not go far enough. He would make any system of instruction voluntary, and, therefore, so far as improving the Volunteer force, we should not be one step further, because the success must depend entirely upon individual goodwill, effort, opportunity, and energy. He does not like to suggest, in any way, that the examination should be made compulsory. Therefore I cannot support the scheme, for I do maintain that, whatever system of instruction or examination is adopted, it should be made compulsory upon the officers of the Volunteer force. When we talk of Volunteers, or when we meet

for discussions on Volunteer subjects, it would seem as if there was only one party to the question, viz., the Volunteer officers, the defenders of the country; but I beg to say there is another party, and that party is the inhabitants of the country to be defended by the Volunteers. Please to forget me as a somewhat notorious teacher. I am speaking to-night simply as an inhabitant of this country, living at Coombe Bank, Camberley, Surrey. The fact that I live at that spot makes me take a personal and practical interest in the question, because I believe that it is possible, owing to the chance absence of our fleet, that an invader's force may land on our shores, and then march direct on the country. It so happens that the house where I live is situated between two of the main lines of approach from Portsmouth and Southampton, and not half-a-mile from either. I am not speaking, then, in any spirit of levity at all; I take a personal interest in these Volunteers, and I always do regard the Volunteers as people who may have to defend me and mine. Well then, gentlemen, I am not going to support any system which leaves your efficiency as Volunteers to depend upon yourselves; I insist as an inhabitant, that any system for making you efficient to defend me shall be compulsory, and I will show you the need for it from Colonel Balfour's own paper. Colonel Balfour has given you certain details as to what the Force that is to defend us consists of, and I think that when I have brought that out, you will all be in favour of the application of compulsion to any system of training whatever. First, he has made use of a very apt simile indeed, in connection with the men and the officers, who have of their own free will undertaken the defence of this country. He has talked of bricks and bricklayers, and what does he tell us? He says the men of the Force are half-burnt bricks, liable to be put out of shape with the least touch. I corroborate what he says, because in the Long Valley and elsewhere I very often come across these "half-burnt bricks." And those who have to handle these "half-burnt bricks." What does he say about them? The bricks are very friable, and we should like to see that very good officers are sent to deal with them. But no. He does not even say the men who are to build them up into the wall of defence between us inhabitants and the invader are even "journeymen" bricklayers. They are certainly not "master" bricklayers, according to Colonel Balfour, but he certainly says they are "bricklayers' apprentices"; and we, the inhabitants, have at this very moment for our protection walls of "half-burnt bricks" put together by "bricklayers' apprentices." I know many officers of the Force pretty well, and allow me, therefore, to say that in that Force there are not only "journeymen" bricklayers, but "master" bricklayers as well; and I may tell my brother-officers of the Regular forces, whom I see in front of me, that there are Volunteer officers of high and low degree who know as much of their profession, and sometimes a great deal more than many of my brethren in the Regulars. Now I pass to the next thing in the lecture, which is a little bit startling. This question of examinations. First, I may say that when my friend Mr. Spencer Wilkinson talked rather about the hardship of examinations, he had not done as I have—examined Volunteer officers for promotion; and if you only knew the very simple examinations they have to pass, and the lenient view the examiner has to take of it, I do not think you would have very much sympathy with those who are rejected. With regard to this examination, why is it necessary? Colonel Balfour wants it in order to induce study of the text-books, and he tells you what is the value of that study in its bearing on the knowledge of tactics. But the grounds on which he urges this study are rather appalling to the inhabitants of this country. He says:—"I have passed aside from my general line of argument a little in order to press this point, for I am anxious to persuade my brother Volunteer officers that if only they will master"—what?—"the rudiments of tactical science." This implies, surely, that if they have not studied the text-books, they have not even mastered the "rudiments of tactical science." What a pleasant revelation to the unfortunate inhabitants of this country! The study of the text-book causes men to master these rudiments; the value of the examina-

tion is to give us a guarantee that these rudiments have been studied; and here are these alarming figures which I worked out last night: that out of some 2,000 Volunteer officers taken at random from the Army List, we the inhabitants of this country have absolutely no guarantee that 1,500 of them know even the "rudiments of tactical science." Gentlemen, that is rather a serious matter when you come to look at the question from the point of view that the Volunteers may be at any moment required to carry out the defence of this country; this fact that as to 1,500 out of 2,000 officers you have no guarantee that they know the "rudiments of tactical science." Now I pass on to the last point which I intend to refer to in the lecture, and I think it may be a revelation to you, but it is no revelation to me. He says:—"I have not the slightest inclination to minimise the difficulties which a very large number of Volunteer officers find in giving the necessary time to military studies and exercises." Time necessary for what? Simply for rendering those men efficient leaders of the men who are to defend my house and hundreds of thousands of houses in this country. He admits they have not got the necessary time, and what does Colonel Balfour say after that? He says: "And I know that anything approaching to any further compulsory sacrifices would tend to increase the dearth of officers." Well, why not? Do you think I want Coombe Bank defended by a man who has not had the time necessary to master the rudiments of tactical science, who cannot even in peace-time be trusted to touch these "half-burnt bricks," cannot do so even in peace-time without fear of putting them out of shape? I say, let them go—I do not want them, they are a danger to me! Bring it home to yourselves as inhabitants of this country that as my friend Colonel Balfour says, the Volunteers are what the country makes them. I want the country to make them what they ought to be, not to leave them the dangerous and unreliable Force they are. Just suppose that under some system you had a very great depletion of officers. I hardly know how much it would be, but say a very large depletion of officers—what is to follow? You cannot set men to build walls and give them an overwhelming number of bricks; they can only have the number of bricks they can manage at one time. The depletion of officers must be followed by carting away a number of the half-burnt bricks, and you must reduce your men till they are manageable units in the hands of the efficient officers you have available. That is not an original opinion of mine, as many of you know, and who will refer to my lectures last year. I take my stand by Marshal Niel, who, when he organised the Garde Mobile of France, was reproached for doing it slowly; but he said: "No, I will not allow any Corps to be formed until I have obtained officers to command them." What I propose is simply the application of that sound principle. Let me tell you what you will have left after this depletion of officers and men, and I leave you to compare what you could have with what you have got now. You have now between 300 and 400 units of Volunteers. Say you are reduced to 75 units, and your Force from 230,000 to 50,000, think what that 50,000 would be; 50,000 of the pick of the Volunteer force; 50,000 Englishmen; those who are in the ranks far superior in their intelligence to ordinary men in the line, led and commanded by men who owe their position not merely to social influence, but social influence combined with knowledge of the profession. Why, gentlemen, you would have 50,000 men that no country has ever produced, and no country in the world could produce. You would have 50,000 men who could be relied upon for the defence of the heart of the Empire, and who would, therefore, be one of the most stalwart bulwarks of the world-wide Empire of Great Britain. You would have 50,000 men in whose ranks it would be a pride to stand, or in which it would be a pride to hold a commission; you would have 50,000 men whom, if it happened that some illustrious visitor came to review in the Long Valley and took a bird's-eye view of from the Fox Hills or Cæsar's Camp, he would not simply look at them and pass pleasant flatteries upon them; no, he would scan them closely as one of the most potent factors which any Power with evil eye intent upon this country would have to take seriously into account.

Gentlemen, if this were carried out you would have a force in which any Englishman, whether peer or commoner, poor or rich, would be proud to have his name enrolled. And now let me meet one objection which will be made. We shall be told: "Yes, but if you apply your compulsory system to the Volunteers, your proposal will be extremely unpopular." No Member of Parliament, careful of his seat in the House of Commons, would dare to venture to support such a revolutionary measure; and remember, that all these 230,000 voters have a vote at the polls." It will be said that no Government, however strong, would dare to carry such a measure into effect. Gentlemen, in the name of the Volunteers of this country, I scout those imputations with scorn and indignation. Gentlemen, what was the spirit that brought the Volunteer force into existence? It was the spirit of patriotism. Gentlemen, what is the spirit that has led you, the officers and men, to make sacrifices of time, money, and labour, and to keep that Force going? It is the spirit of patriotism. Will you not, gentlemen, now, if it be found necessary that a great and sweeping revolution should be made in the Force, in order to convert you from what you are now, a Force as a whole unreliable, because untrained—if it should become necessary to carry out a reform which may convert you into a trustworthy and trusted nation's guard of England, will you not allow the same spirit of true patriotism to prevail, and, though with regret, accept the same uncomplainingly? My Lord, the eel is ready to be skinned.

Lord WOLSELEY: There are still before me the cards of several officers who have been good enough to express their willingness to give us the benefit of their opinions upon the subject under discussion. But it is already getting late, and as I have an engagement which I must keep, I should be unable to remain to hear them speak. With your permission I shall, therefore, call now upon Colonel Balfour, the lecturer, to give us his views upon the various points that have been touched upon by those who have spoken. We must then conclude our proceedings for this evening. I regret extremely that I am obliged to do this, but I do not see my way to any other course.

Colonel E. J. A. BALFOUR: I will detain you very shortly indeed. Lord Wantage was the first speaker who made any criticism upon my lecture, and both in his case, and in that of the other speakers, I ought to say at once I thank them for the extreme courtesy of their remarks, and for the very kind words they have spoken in appreciation of what I was able to write. Lord Wantage complained a little, I think, that I perhaps "piled it on" somewhat too strongly in defining "tactics." I think, perhaps, if you refer to what I actually said, it was to the effect that in their *complete* form, tactics involve a knowledge of the subjects referred to. I am afraid I showed want of clearness, but I never desired to produce the effect of suggesting that junior officers should be expected to know any large quantity of all the various subjects I did refer to. Of course, these ought to be mastered by senior officers. If I may be permitted to point out, Lord Wantage himself made a very amusing commentary upon his own criticisms when he described how a fellow-subaltern, in his early days of soldiering, had been called upon to put a house in a state of defence. That was, of course, exactly one of the very points I was anxious should be understood by the ordinary officer in a very simple way. I do think it is important that subaltern officers should be able to throw up an earthwork at a proper angle and in proper form. I was very much interested to hear the remarks of Colonel Mayhew and Colonel Patton as applying specially to country tactical societies, because they both bore out one of the chief points of my lecture, the method of what I should call teaching by correspondence. I do think that is some approach to the solution of the difficulty we all feel of reaching country officers by a practical method which would not cost much money and would not force them to travel long and expensive journeys. Major-General Lord Methuen was specially kind in his

remarks about myself, but I feel I cannot have made myself quite clear, or I must have produced a false impression in his mind. I had hoped the scheme I sketched was one which would be of real assistance in reaching officers of average intelligence and in distant localities. Of course, I entirely agree with him that money is wanted. I tried to avoid the question of finance in my lecture. Money is wanted not only in the way Lord Methuen mentioned; and I feel very strongly it would be most desirable if the Government would sometime see its way to grant money to teaching tactical societies, provided they were under the direct supervision of general officers commanding districts, or regimental districts. I think that is a method by which real assistance, at but slight cost, might be directly given to the best class of Volunteers. Mr. Spencer Wilkinson, whom we are always glad to listen to, because there are very few men who have done more by their literary ability in assisting the Volunteer force, dwelt very strongly upon the point of the direct instruction of the battalion or corps, and upon official inspection as ensuring that. I think that was his main point. Of course, I did try and point out in my lecture that I regarded tactical societies as indirectly leading to that result. That is to say, if the senior officers of regiments, corps, or battalions, would attend at tactical societies, they would then in their turn be able to pass on their knowledge to their juniors. I strongly believe that the proper instruction for the Volunteer unit is the senior Volunteer officer. But he has no means of getting such knowledge except through a properly-conducted tactical society. That seems to be the natural chain of instruction—tactical societies, commanding officers, and then junior officers, and so all the way down. Of course, we all regret extremely that Sir Francis Grenfell should have found it necessary to state the facts he has in relation to Volunteer officers having passed tactical examinations in such few numbers, but we must face these facts as they are. I can only say I myself will do my very best, as far as my little influence goes, to try and insist that the examinations not only in tactical subjects, but in other subjects, shall be passed by everybody who might be induced to do so. Colonel Lonsdale Hale has come forward with one of his brilliant speeches, but I think he has misunderstood me. The whole of my lecture depended upon what I call the Volunteer system as at present constituted. I was not here to lecture upon a reform of the Volunteer system, but upon a scheme of teaching tactics to Volunteer officers under the existing system. I have written in the past two or three articles, which are obtainable by anybody, in which I advocated a far more revolutionary reformation in the Volunteer system than Colonel Lonsdale Hale himself has suggested. But it seems to me, speaking as a practical man, that we should face problems in a practical way. Whatever I may think desirable in the way of reform of the Volunteer system is one question. But taking that system as it is, it is surely the most practical thing to do to try and show you that the system as it is can be improved. The two problems are separate. Colonel Lonsdale Hale pointed out that there was a question of popularity in voting, and so on. That is true, and I do not think at the present moment there is the slightest chance of any such scheme, as I and others have sketched, of a general reform of the Volunteer system being carried out in the present state of public opinion. That being so, should we not put our shoulders to the wheel, and do the very best we can with what we have got? That seems to me a perfectly sound argument. I think perhaps my words were twisted by Colonel Lonsdale Hale, so as to mean more than they were intended to convey. I talked, it is true, about the "half burnt bricks," and of course the Volunteer force as compared with the Regulars is in that sense composed of half-burnt bricks. But let us recollect when we see Volunteers out at Easter, and at other times, that they have in their ranks recruits of but a few weeks' standing, and who have done seven or eight *hours*' drill at the most. Compare such men with the men in the Regular force, who are not put in the ranks till they have had seventeen months' training in the case of the Royal Marines, or four months' in the case of the Guards; of course they are

comparatively half-burnt bricks. It is, therefore, a little hard, I think, to press my meaning quite to the extent that Colonel Hale has done. In fact, if we can do what we do with a few hours' work, the implication is that we should very rapidly be able to do more with a comparatively small amount of additional regular work. Colonel Hale also talked of Volunteer officers having *impossibility* in finding the necessary time to study tactics. I think my word was that they found *difficulty*. I have not the slightest inclination to minimise the difficulty which a very large number of officers find. I was trying throughout the lecture to point out how these difficulties should be overcome. That they can be overcome, I believe. Then, of course, to launch out into the question of reduction of numbers is a very serious matter, involving many outside problems, such as those of recruiting, finance, and, so on, which I do not suppose anybody who has not had to face the financial difficulties a commanding officer of Volunteers has to face, has ever even thought of. I cannot go into these matters now—they are beyond the scope of this discussion; but I think these are such important elements in the case that it would be wholly unfair to consider even the purely tactical question without going into them. One more point only. I believe that the body of Volunteers as a whole has throughout its career been continuously improving. So long as improvement is continuous such a Force is worth maintaining. If that Force lost its *esprit de corps*, and once began to go down hill, then I think it would be legitimate for the Military Authorities to consider whether its days ought not to be numbered. But so long as it is progressing, however slowly, so long it seems to me those engaged in helping it on have a right to demand that their efforts shall be recognised, and from time to time assisted, even by money. That is all I have to say, except to thank you, my lord, for presiding at this lecture, and to thank the audience and speakers for the very kind way in which they have received my lecture, and especially those speakers who, when they criticised me, did so in the most pleasant possible spirit, and in the most encouraging way.

Lord WOLSELEY : Before I proceed to say anything whatever on the various topics which have been so well and clearly brought before us, not only by the lecturer, but by some of the subsequent speakers, allow me to say what a pleasure it is to me to find myself once more surrounded by the members of this Institution. I have been, as you know, entirely absent from England for five years. Although I had a tactical society in Ireland, where we did a certain amount of good, it was on a very small scale, and we could not at all expect it to equal in usefulness this great and long-established Institution. It is many years since I had the pleasure of being here, and I hope it may not by any means be the last occasion that I shall have the honour of presiding at your meetings. After a considerable absence I come back to find that you have quitted the ruined tenement I left you in, and have taken up your abode in this very fine building. That is a matter upon which I think we cannot congratulate ourselves too much. And may I add that, although there have been some hard things said this evening about the authorities which govern—I do not say whether justly said or not—the Government has met the members of our Institution very fairly by allowing us to establish ourselves permanently in the splendid hall which adjoins this theatre.

Well, gentlemen, I feel great diffidence in speaking this evening, or in criticising the topics that have been raised, because I am here in two capacities. In the first place, I remember that as Commander-in-Chief of the Army I must be very guarded in my remarks, lest I should at all imply that the Authorities at the War Office—those who keep the purse strings in England—are backward in their endeavours to make the Volunteer force what we all hope it may eventually become, what it is, I think, on the high road to become, a thoroughly efficient military body, fully capable of fulfilling the wants and requirements of the nation,

and even of defending that beautiful lodge in Surrey where my gallant friend, Colonel Lonsdale Hale, resides. (Laughter.) I think in the discussion that has taken place, and also in the remarks of the lecturer, there has been a slight confusion of meaning in the terms made use of. It is a very common error, and I am sure what I say will be appreciated by all those who have had to instruct younger officers—I refer to the mingling up of two distinct terms, or perhaps I ought to say, the failure to draw a precise line between the “art of tactics” and the “science of strategy.” We hear men sometimes talk of the “science of tactics.” Now, that is, I think, a misapplication of words, for “strategy” is a science, and “tactics” is an art. It is very desirable that you should keep this distinction in your minds in all military discussions. As regards strategy, we all know how desirable, how essential it is that those who hold high positions of command, all general officers, all staff officers, and those who have to instruct others in military matters generally, should have a very extensive knowledge of strategy and of military history, from which, I may say, the rules of strategy are derived. As regards tactics, it is an art; and, as far as I am able to speak with any authority, is an easily-acquired art. I think it was Sir Charles Napier—I am not quite certain—who said that he was prepared to teach a great deal of tactics to a regiment in any part of Great Britain, because he could with a small body of even ten men marching along a road teach the preliminary and fundamental principles of this military art. I fully agree with him. I believe any captain of a regiment can do this. I go further, and maintain that a very large amount of what we call tactical instruction can be imparted in a room. Given a blackboard and a good instructor, I believe it would be possible to convey to the mind of the ordinary British private, and therefore still more easily to the mind of a private in the Volunteers, a considerable amount of tactical knowledge. He could thus be taught much as to what he should do, and the steps he should take, if he suddenly found himself in presence of an enemy. Outpost, rear guard, and advance guard duties can to a large extent be taught in a room. I quite agree with my friend Mr. Spencer Wilkinson that a great deal can be taught in this way without going out of doors at all. I do not for a moment wish to depreciate the superior value of instruction that is given in the field and during practical manœuvres. On the contrary, I think the more all officers of the Regular troops and of the Volunteers go into camp and are there taught tactics and tactical operations on the ground, the better it will be for them and for the Army. Mr. Spencer Wilkinson said that the officers of a regiment are generally what the commanding officer makes them. That I believe to be absolutely and entirely the case. I will even go further, and say that the men of a company are what the captain makes them. But if captains mean to do their duty thoroughly and properly, they will carefully study themselves the subjects which it is their duty to teach their men. They are the best men to teach those under their command. If a company is badly instructed it is the captain's fault, and you may then expect to find men at manœuvres in the position described by one speaker—facing the wrong way when on outpost duty. When I remember what Volunteers were, and when I see and know what they are at the present moment, I cannot help congratulating them upon all that they have done in recent years. We all know what they were at first. They had very little discipline and a very small knowledge of drill. Now they have improved in both those points. When I refer to drill, may I plead a little in its favour? It is a point which has been rather kept in the background this evening. All experienced soldiers know well that skill in tactical formations, and in tactical operations, depends very much upon the manner in which the troops concerned have learnt their drill. No man, I suppose, has worked harder than I have to reform the old-fashioned drill, and to make it what it is at the present moment. I have worked to get rid of all sorts of obsolete formations, of old-fashioned processes, and complicated and intricate barrack-square manœuvres, which looked very pretty, no doubt; I have always done that, and will always continue to do so. But I have never for a

moment deprecated or depreciated the value to a soldier of a sound knowledge of his drill. That this knowledge is essential to the soldier cannot be pressed too strongly upon all ranks of the Volunteer force. Drill is a point to which all Volunteers, especially those in the country parts of England, might with great advantage turn their attention a little more than they have done. The lecturer has referred to those people who wish to run before they can walk, and I know from experience that all soldiers should learn to walk well before they attempt to run, and that in order to be efficient as fighting men in the field they should first learn to drill well. Drill is not only a process of moving men in certain formations and in large bodies, but it is also a mode of imparting discipline. It not only trains the body, but it disciplines the mind at the same time. It teaches men the first rudiments of obedience; and if I were asked what is the greatest of all military virtues, a virtue even higher than courage, I should reply, it was absolute, unquestioning obedience. I do not think you can teach obedience to a body of men better than by a process which we commonly understand by the word drill. I have often watched from my barrack-room window a non-commissioned officer drilling a squad of recruits in the barrack square. The language used was perhaps occasionally not purely classical or of the choicest description, but it was very effective. It made the men understand what was wanted of them. The first object in the mind of the drill-sergeant is that the men he is drilling shall be absolutely obedient to his every word of command. The hour's drill upon the barrack square was consequently a lesson, an instruction imparted to the minds of the men being drilled that was of far greater value than any amount of proficiency in the goose-step, or in the art of "right and left turn" he was then engaged in teaching them. I cannot, therefore, help thinking that although a sound knowledge of tactics is of great consequence to all officers, proficiency in drill is essential for every man, no matter what his rank may be, who aspires to be a thoroughly good soldier. In our anxiety to learn tactics, we must not neglect to make ourselves, in the first place, perfect in drill. We have had some very valuable recommendations made to us as to the mode in which tactical knowledge can be most easily and effectively imparted to the officers of the Volunteer Service. The lecturer told us that tactical knowledge must not be compulsory, whilst my very eloquent and learned friend on my right (Colonel Lonsdale Hale) told us it is absolutely necessary that it should be made compulsory, and that unless it was so the object aimed at would never be secured. We have been told that 1,500 out of 2,000 officers had not qualified themselves in minor tactics. That fact showed there was a great deal to be said in favour of making it compulsory; but, as Colonel Balfour said, we have to deal with actual facts, and we cannot lay down any rule as to what would be the best possible process for imparting the tactical knowledge we are anxious that Volunteer officers should learn. We must take the Volunteer force as we find it—and a magnificent Force it is—and above all things we must do nothing that will injure that instinct, that patriotic feeling, referred to by Colonel Lonsdale Hale, which called it into existence. We must remember what that Force is composed of. We must remember that a very large proportion of the officers in it cannot devote themselves day by day, or even for some hours during specified weeks in the winter, to learn what we would like to teach them. We have to take them as they are. As practical men, if we cannot have a whole loaf we must be contented to take half. If a man has a gap in his fence and cannot afford to have an iron gate, he must be prepared to put up with a wooden one. That is the way in which we must look at the Volunteer force. We must try and facilitate, in every possible way we can, the acquisition of tactical knowledge by officers of the Force; but I am afraid we have not yet arrived at that period when we can lay down a hard and fast rule and say dictatorially to the officers, "Unless you learn so-and-so, and pass certain examinations, we must dispense with your services." On the other hand, I do believe that whenever we get a bad commanding officer we should do in the Volunteers what I hope we shall always do in

the Line, namely, get rid of him. If the men and officers of a battalion of the Line or the companies are not properly instructed, and if they show a great want of tactical knowledge, and great want of discipline, or if they do not march well, the first thing to do is to change the commanding officer; and I hope the same course which is adopted in the Line will be adopted also in the Volunteers. If we find a Volunteer battalion in a bad state, careful inquiry into the circumstances should be made, and if we suspect that the fault lies at the door of the commanding officer, we must say to him very civilly, "Sir, you have done your best, but your best is not good enough for us, and you must go." Gentlemen, it is getting late, and I regret to say that I must leave to fulfil an engagement which I made some time ago. I should have liked to say many more things, but I hope to have other opportunities of doing so. I should, however, like you to carry away this feeling with you, that there is no man in England who has a greater admiration for the Volunteer force than I have. That is no lip-saying on my part. I have always fought the battle for the Volunteers, and I hope to be always able to do so. You may rest assured of this, that when anything affects the efficiency of the Volunteer force, if I can do anything in my capacity to rectify it, or to help on tactical instruction in that great Service, you will always find me anxious to do so. It is a Force we cannot make too much of. It is a Force upon which we must always depend to a great extent for the defence of this country. 'Indeed, I fully recognise that if the Volunteer force, instead of growing in size and increasing in efficiency as it is now doing, were to decline either in numbers or efficiency, it would be a serious matter for the rulers of this country. They would soon have to consider the propriety, the necessity, of largely augmenting the Regular Army. We know what that augmentation would throw, not upon the country only, but upon everyone of us as taxpayers. I am glad to find there is no likelihood of any such misfortune overtaking us, because year by year this great Volunteer force goes on prospering and also improving in efficiency. I believe that your tactical societies which have been started in many places recently, and are now working so admirably, have largely helped towards this improved military efficiency and the spread in knowledge upon tactical subjects. Gentlemen, I am very glad to find myself once more amongst you, and I thank you for the attention with which you have listened to me this evening.