

ENGLISH GUNNERY EXPERIMENTS.

The Secretary of State for War illustrated yesterday at the School of Gunnery, Shoeburyness, in the presence of a large and distinguished company, by a series of experiments, the progress made during the past year in the science of artillery. Colonel Hastings, Commandant of the School of Gunnery, commenced a very interesting programme by firing one of the new 8-inch howitzers at a range of one thousand yards displaying the efficiency of this hybrid production, which has superseded the ancient mortar, and formed a connecting link with the long guns of modern days, and at the same time exhibiting the remarkable action of the anti-recoil buffer, a hydraulic arrangement attached to the front of the earth-work or casemate, which brings up the gun before it has retreated two or three feet after discharge, a point of some importance in confined situations. A smaller howitzer, mounted on a hydro-pneumatic elevating carriage, could not be fired, owing to a troublesome barge anchoring just in front of the range, but its action was explained and the usefulness fully realized. The gunners remain perfectly under cover, aiming at the object of attack by reflecting sights, or, as was done in the case of other experiments yesterday, laying back upon fixed points in the rear previously determined by observation.

Then the spectators had the opportunity of contrasting in action the rival systems of breech loading and muzzle loading, as applied to the newest and most perfect of the field guns—the 15-pounders, the guns being, except as to the breech, precisely alike. At 1000 yards range earthworks had been constructed—sections of ordinary siege parallel, with wooden dunnocks to represent the gun detachments standing behind them. Each of the two muzzle-loading guns fired 15 rounds, five of which were of the common kind which burst into irregular kinds, five filled with shrapnel bullets, cast forward by the burst, and five composed of a series of rings, which are formed to scatter deadly morsels on breaking up, at the moment which may be allotted by the time fuse. The fire proved more destructive. The earthworks were so much damaged as to be quite untenable, and the dummy men in the rear were all knocked over or riddled with splinters and bullets. The working of both guns was exceedingly satisfactory, the breech-loader naturally having a slight advantage in rapidity, while the breech action was simplicity itself, Mr. Childers showing with his own hand, unassisted, how easy it was to work. Both guns being very light in comparison with their charges, evinced a marked tendency to recoil, which was to some extent checked in the one by the application of a brake to the nave of the wheels, but the other skipped away fifteen feet to the rear each time that it was fired. Proceeding to another part of the ground, just as a protest came by the telephone from a neighboring farmer, who found himself under a bombardment of shell, the company witnessed a trial of the several machine guns which are at present competing for official adoption.

First, the old Gatling revolving mitrailleuse was fired, but the specimen weapon appeared to be out of order, and although it got through its work in a remarkably short space of time, there were several hitches, and about one-third of the shots were misfires. There were three of the Gardner guns tested one having five barrels, another two and a third only one. Of these, the two barrel gun, which is the favorite, acquitted itself the best, but an examination of the targets at the close of the attack was not quite conclusively convincing as to the value of machine guns. The shots had wasted themselves so much in groups, perhaps from insufficient employment of the traversing gear, and some of the infantry men pointed on the targets had escaped without a hit. The figures representing cavalry came in for the hottest fire, proving apparently the inherent defect of rifle shooting, manual or mechanical, which is to fire high.

The Nordenfolt machine, with its murderous steel bullets, was also fired to display its faculty for the destruction of torpedo boats, and penetrated half an inch of iron at 200 yards with the greatest ease. These guns are now being supplied to the royal navy, and a lighter pattern is being made for field service and permanent works. Upon the sea front, facing the Maplin sands, were placed the heavier guns, arranged to take part in the day's proceedings. The great breech-loader of 3-1/2 tons, recently turned out at Woolwich, was the chief centre of interest, and acquitted itself well both at long and short ranges. It was followed by a 25-pounder on a naval carriage, by an 8-inch breech loading Armstrong gun of 11 1/2 tons, and by a 4-ton 6-inch breech loader on a Vavasseur carriage. All the heavy guns were fired at sea targets, at distances ranging up to 2,200 yds and made excellent practice. —London News, July 21.

The average Detroitian seems to have forgotten even the President's illness, and Mr. Joy's philanthropy in his enthusiasm over base ball. Old men huddled to the corners on Saturday evening to enquire the results of the game with Chicago, and children were killed by the nurses with promises to take them up to see Tuesday's game. It is a big time for Detroit and no mistake; and although we do not know where the young men came from who won the victory, the victory is ours all the same. Frederick the Great never cared whether his grenadiers were German or Irish so long as they were big; and though we hire instead of kidnapping our base ballers, we are equally proud of them, and equally careless about where they come from. —Detroit News.

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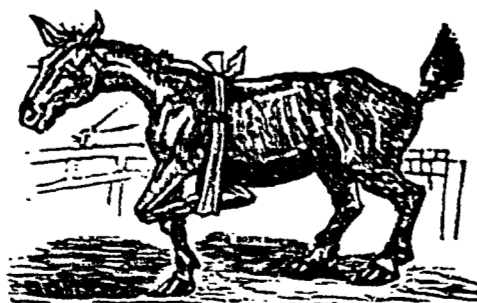
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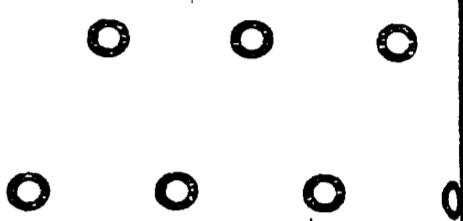
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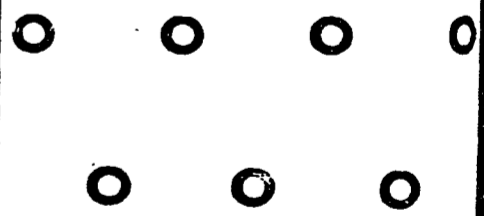
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