

interests of commercial morality it would be extremely regrettable if Messrs. Baring Brothers and their guarantors were to be protected at the cost of the ordinary investor. If the recommendation of the English members of the Committee were to be adopted it would mean, to put the matter as briefly as possible, that a new debt of about £12,000,000 would be added in three years to the existing liabilities of the Argentine Republic, that this debt would involve an annual charge of about £720,000 a year, and that this annual charge would take precedence of all the existing sterling debt with the sole exception of the 1886 loan. We venture to say that to approve of such a recommendation would be to offer a premium to reckless disregard of the interests of investors.

THE MAGAZINE RIFLE.

THE many rumours of defects in the new magazine rifle have culminated in a powerful indictment of its principle and capabilities. In two trenchant articles a writer in the *Times* dissected the weapon, pointing out its shortcomings with evident knowledge. The direct challenge thrown down was first met by a carefully guarded statement, furnished by the Adjutant-General—who has since admitted that he does not know much about rifles—to the effect that although “certain defects have appeared,” these are not “such as prove the rifle to be other than a good military weapon.” This pronouncement has been followed up, after due delay, by a manifesto signed by the “available” members of the now defunct Small Arms Committee, in which the charges made by the *Times* are combated with varying success. The rejoinder appeared in the same issue, and the public can form a fair idea of the merits of the dispute.

Certain serious defects in the Mark I. rifle seem to be admitted, but are all to be remedied in a new pattern not yet produced. The extraordinary percentage of breakdowns during ordinary musketry practice, to which the *Times* drew attention, is not denied; and nothing is less likely to inspire confidence in the knowledge of the rifle possessed by its inventors than the fact that wrong and wholly unnecessary orders were issued in regard to its use, and subsequently revoked. Unless the figures quoted by the *Times* can be disposed of, it is idle to point to the arbitrary and artificial tests to which the early rifles were subjected, as proving the fitness of the new arm for the purposes of the soldier.

The broad facts appear to be that a very large number of unreliable rifles have been already turned out; that the pattern was determined before any service ammunition was obtained; and that a large and expensive plant for the manufacture of a special system was prematurely laid down. The main question now is whether the defects in Mark I. can be satisfactorily remedied, or whether they are inherent in the system. Until Mark II. has been in the hands of the troops for at least one course of musketry training, this question cannot be answered; and meanwhile, the Committee having ceased to exist, it is not clear who is designing the new pattern, still less who will be responsible to the country that a satisfactory arm is at length produced. Considering that the total cost of the re-arming in progress will not be less than five millions, the issues which must now be decided are considerable from the merely financial point of view. The cost of a possible blunder is, however, a small matter compared to the results which might arise from arming our troops with a weapon unfitted for the rough usage of war. The real question is there-

fore one of relative urgency. France having hastily adopted an indifferent magazine rifle, in her eagerness to steal a march on her rival, Germany was impelled to follow suit with an arm also possessing objections; and most of the other European Powers immediately proceeded to re-arm, at great cost and with doubtful success.

It is unquestionable that a completely satisfactory magazine rifle would, under certain circumstances, confer advantages upon the troops who are armed with it; but these advantages are capable of much exaggeration. When, in the war of 1866, the Austrians, armed with muzzle-loaders, were confronted with troops who carried a rifle that could be far more rapidly loaded, and loaded in any position, they suffered a necessary loss of *morale*. The man who was compelled to bring his weapon into a special position, tediously ram home his bullet, and fumble for a percussion cap, inevitably felt himself inferior to his antagonist who could load at the hip with a single, simple, and swift operation. Troops armed with the muzzle-loader in the American War felt themselves heavily handicapped when confronted—as occasionally happened—with an enemy using the Winchester repeater. We rightly remember these things, and lay it down as an axiom that our infantry should never be called upon to face an enemy under conditions so disadvantageous. The advantages of magazine rifles over modern breech-loaders are, however, relatively small. The Mark I. rifle, with magazine filled, possesses for the moment a higher speed of fire than the Martini; but in five minutes' continuous firing the superiority practically disappears, and the difference is too small to give rise to any real tactical disadvantage. To derive real superiority of fire from the magazine arm, therefore, requires that the one force can at the “decisive moment” count on full magazines, and is under sufficient control to use them *en masse*. As this decisive moment is rarely, if ever, recognised by the combatants themselves, and is usually laid down by the historian after the event, it is evident that the realisation of the full advantages of the magazine arm is somewhat problematic. While such considerations could not possibly justify any nation in withholding the new arm from its troops, and permitting them to fight under any sense of disadvantage, they evidently inculcate caution in the selection of a rifle. Whatever may be the loss of *morale* experienced by the soldier unprovided with a magazine, it could not approach that which would inevitably result from the possession of a rifle which proved mechanically untrustworthy.

The question of the bore is of another nature. The advantages of a small calibre are unquestioned, and the barrel of the new rifle appears to be satisfactory. Accepting the 303 bore as the service pattern, it appears obvious that the conversion of the Martini to this calibre should be pressed forward as fast as possible. We should then be in possession of an excellent small-bore rifle, with a breech action abundantly tested under service conditions of every kind; while the main objection to the Martini—the somewhat heavy recoil, which constitutes a moral factor perhaps too little considered—will disappear. Meanwhile, before we are finally committed to a magazine rifle, let later inventions be fully considered, without prejudice or *idées fixes*. No divinity hedges the Lee-Speed breech action, which in its present form possesses certain considerable defects of principle. Provided that the barrel is retained, and that diversity of ammunition is not entailed, a variation of breech action is not a serious matter; and even if a better system can be found, the rifles already manufactured need not be thrown away if their defects can be remedied. The necessary trials

could all be carried out in three or four months, and the urgency does not appear to be so great as to justify us in accepting all the risks which a mistaken decision, too hastily taken, would involve.

A few months ago THE SPEAKER pointed out that "if the new rifle proves a failure, there is no one to whom the blame could be attached." The recent official communication supplies an instructive commentary on this statement. The committee—really two or three committees—cannot be held responsible for anything. The important decision to begin manufacturing on a large scale appears, however, to have been taken on the advice—directly furnished to the Secretary of State—of the latest committee, plus other personages arbitrarily selected. Technically, the only official who could possibly be held responsible for the adoption of a new arm is the Commander-in-Chief, whom, curiously enough, the Secretary of State omitted to mention. It may well be questioned whether the Administrative chaos thus revealed is not a far graver matter than any mistake which may at present have been made in regard to the new rifle.

DEAN CHURCH.

IF the Church of England lost in Dr. Liddon her greatest preacher, she has lost in the late Dean of St. Paul's her most accomplished divine. He was, indeed, an ideal ecclesiastic. With a thorough mastery of the literature of ancient Greece and Rome he united an exceptional knowledge of the best literature of mediæval and modern Italy and France. With the masterpieces of English literature he was more than familiar. He did not profess to be a German scholar; but he could read the language and had a competent knowledge of the classics of Germany. In theology he was also well read, and his sketch of Bacon shows that he kept abreast of the progress of physical science. And what he knew he knew well. His mind revolted against anything slipshod, either in the acquisition or in the imparting of knowledge. He was a conscientious worker, and always put his best into whatever he took in hand. He thus acquired by habit the literary art which conceals art. His style is beautiful in its finished simplicity. He wrote only on subjects which he had thoroughly mastered and on which he had something to say, and he said it in language the clearest and best which he could command. There was nothing slovenly about him, and nothing showy, either in mind or body; and the grace and distinction of the style was but the literary expression of the natural courtesy of the man. Yet with all his charm and refinement and rare modesty, Dean Church was a man of iron will. Tender as a woman in his affections and sympathies, he was as bold in action as he was wise in council. The sensitiveness of his conscience made him shrink from popularity, but no amount of violence or unpopularity could ever shake his purpose in defending a cause which he believed to be just. The first proof which he gave to the outside world of this indomitable courage in the face of popular clamour and in the presence of a crowd of foes was in the attempt on the part of the Convocation of Oxford University to degrade Ward of Oriel from his degree on account of his "Ideal of a Christian Church," a book which claimed for English Churchmen the right to teach nearly all Roman doctrines while still remaining members of the Church of England. Newman and his friends resented Ward's mischievous interposition in their controversy; but Newman's opponents saw their chance. They thought they could strike at Newman and the whole Tractarian party under cover of Ward's outrageous "Ideal," and they called accordingly for a meeting of Convocation. The Proctors for the year were Guillemard and Church—Guillemard being Senior Proctor.

The Proctors have the privilege of quashing a vote of Convocation, but the privilege is very rarely exercised. This occasion was exceptional. Young Church (he was only twenty-nine) convinced himself that the hostile majority in Convocation intended to strike at Newman and his party through Ward's indiscretions, and he immediately resolved to defeat the plot, and persuaded the Senior Proctor to act with him. After a stormy debate Ward (and by implication Newman) was condemned. Then there was an anxious pause which was broken by the Senior Proctor's voice pronouncing the annulling formula, *Nobis proctoribus non placet*. The vote of Convocation was thus repealed amidst frantic shouts of indignation from Newman's opponents. There is a tradition, probably apocryphal, that a burly Evangelical country parson, recognising in Church the real protagonist of the Tractarian party, knocked the slim Fellow of Oriel down. Yet Church deplored the indiscreet and crude though clever polemic of "Ideal" Ward. His own disposition always inclined him to moderate courses. He disliked extremes, dogmatism, intolerance, but he disliked persecution most of all. Young as he then was, there was no wiser head among the Tractarian party. Newman and Pusey were fifteen years his senior; but neither of them could compare with Church in tact and judgment.

Church, like many other distinguished Oxford men of that time, came under the magic spell of Newman, and the two men remained fast friends through life. But Church's admiration of the brilliant leader of the Tractarian party never threw him off his balance. He worked out every problem for himself in the dry light of a singularly clear and conscientious intellect; and when he had once made up his mind as to the right course, he could as little be lured by friendship as intimidated by hostility. He appreciated and greatly admired Newman, but never allowed himself to be dominated by him. And in some respects Church was the greater man of the two. Lacking Newman's dash, self-assertion, and brilliant controversial dexterity, he surpassed him in learning, in sobriety of judgment, and in sagacity. Newman was the greater genius, but had also some of the infirmities too commonly associated with genius—he was erratic and unstable. He furnishes abundant proof of this assertion in his incomparable "Apologia." For instance, Newman, two years before he left the Church of England, published a Retraction of some hard things which he had written against the Church of Rome, and his excuse was that he "was angry with the Anglican divines. I thought they had taken me in; I had read the Fathers with their eyes; I had sometimes trusted their quotations or their reasonings; and, from reliance on them, I had used words or made statements which, by right, I ought rigidly to have examined myself. I had thought myself safe while I had their warrant for what I said. I had exercised more faith than criticism in the matter." Here we have a disposition which naturally led to Rome; a mind which was, by its constitution, prone to "exercise more faith than criticism," and to bow to an authority on antecedent grounds, irrespective of historical credentials. This was a state of mind impossible to Dean Church. No man had a greater reverence for authority than he; but an authority which appealed to history in justification of its jurisdiction had to establish its claim to his satisfaction before he submitted to it. To "exercise more faith than criticism in the matter" would seem to him absurd. Newman, again, with all his tenderness, could be violently intolerant. He could tolerate heretics; on heresiarchs he would have no mercy. The heresiarch was "embodied evil. To spare him is a false and dangerous pity." A friend of Liberal and Evangelical opinions, wrote to expostulate with him, and Newman replied: "We will ride over you and yours as Othniel prevailed over Chushan-Rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia." He cut his brother