

## **Percussion caps for shooting in schools.**

### **Contributors**

Brunton, Thomas Lauder, Sir, 1844-1916.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

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Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>



## PERCUSSION CAPS IN SCHOOLS

Nature, May 1901

The extraordinary explosive power of a percussion cap is known to all chemists, but it is not known to all school children. An explosion of a percussion cap on a candle is sufficient to extinguish a candle at a distance of a few feet. The distance, of course, varies with the nature of the gun, and with the nature of the cap. The gun must be pointed at the candle in order to blow out the candle the aim must be nearly as accurate as would be with a rifle at a hundred yards. In 1900, on May 6, Lord Salisbury proposed that every man having the chance of being within reach of his own cottage should be taught to handle a gun. By the same token, every child might be taught to handle a gun. In case of invasion of this country, the Boys' and Girls' Scouts might be able to act as soldiers, as they are now among the Boers at the present time. It is not surprising that the training of children to handle a rifle is a subject of much interest to the authorities. The child shooting either uses a toy gun, or a real gun, and the expense is not small. But the play soldiers might readily be utilized for the purpose of handling a toy gun, and the expense would be small. For those who are interested in the subject, the following practice with a saloon rifle might be suggested. One single-barrelled old muzzle-loader might be used, and as 240 caps are provided a gun and material for practice.



# PERCUSSION CAPS FOR SHOOTING IN SCHOOLS.

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Nature, May 17th, 1900.  
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The extraordinary explosive power of fulminate of mercury is known to all chemists, but it is not generally known that the explosion of a percussion cap on a gun will cause a current of air sufficient to extinguish a candle at a distance of ten or fifteen feet. The distance, of course, varies with the length and bore of the gun, and with the nature and the size of the candle. The gun must be pointed at the lower part of the wick, and in order to blow out the candle the aim at this distance requires to be nearly as accurate as would be required to make a centre with a rifle at a hundred yards. In a speech to the Primrose League on May 9, Lord Salisbury mentioned the expediency of every man having the chance to learn to handle a rifle within reach of his own cottage. By beginning with percussion caps children might be taught to handle a gun at such an early age, that, in case of invasion of this country, boys of fourteen might be able to act as soldiers, as they are said to be doing amongst the Boers at the present time. The objections to training children to handle a rifle are, first of all, the danger of the child shooting either itself or some one else; and secondly, the expense. But the inclination of children to play soldiers might readily be utilised by teaching them to handle first of all a toy gun, and then to practise shooting at a candle with caps. For those who shoot best with caps, the practice with a saloon rifle might be held out as a reward. One single-barrelled old muzzle-loading gun would suffice for many children, and as 240 caps cost a shilling, the expense of providing a gun and material for practice would be very small.

LAUDER BRUNTON.











