

A FOREST SCENE ON THE AMAZON.

(From the Quarterly Review.)

"The traveller from Europe no sooner arrives at the entrance to the Para river, through which the Amazon is usually reached, than his eye rests on the frontier of the forest, which continues in one unbroken sweep to the foot of the Andes, two thousand miles away.

"Every writer who has tried to describe that forest scene, and render it intelligible to minds familiar only with European vegetation, has been conscious of the imperfect success of his attempt. Epithets piled upon epithets only reveal the poverty of human language when contrasted with the varied prodigality of Nature. Wherever the traveller turns he encounters the boundless forest, through which the only highways are the flowing rivers. On the river's bank the tide-washed roots of the mangrove trees afford a home for myriads of crabs that sport among their foul recesses. Standing out of the mud like huge tripods, they sustain dense bushes, fringing the shore, but growing out of the waters. In other places the loftier forest trees appear to rise directly from the stream. They tower at once high into the air, and yet their tall stems scarcely visible from the river, their leafy crowns alone indicating how varied are their forms. Feathery bamboos wave above the arums that grow along the shallow margin of the stream. Here and there the spreading leaves of the banana, velvety in texture and brilliant in hue, stand out in commanding relief. Yet higher, festoons of passion-flowers drape the riverfront, hanging from the loftier growths of the sapucaya and the Brazil-nut tree. These in turn guide the eye to a still higher region, where they mingle their foliage with the ponds of a thousand palms, in a profusion which, were there no other reminder, tells the traveller that he stands beneath a vertical sun. This self-sustained vegetation has to uphold myriads of dependent plants, which climb up its stems and cluster on its branches, seeking the remote light towards which all are struggling. Vegetable cables are flung from tree to tree, and thence to the ground, binding the forest into a tangled mass, through which it would seem impossible for any aspiring young plant to force its way. Nevertheless, one generation succeeds and mingles with another. The sylvan conflict for life and light goes on age after age, and the tropical forest remains at once primal yet ever young.

"At length the traveller finds some opening on the river's bank, through which he penetrates the forest wall. He now enters a gloomy solitude filled with bare vegetable columns. Leafless stems, bound together by equally leafless creepers, are seen on every hand. The ground under foot is carpeted here and there by lycopods of the loveliest green, but the true foliage of the forest belongs to another region far above the wanderer's head. There the branches intertwine like the richest groins of some Gothic roof, whilst their leaves blend in a dense canopy, through which sun and sky are rarely seen. The foliage seems to belong to the upper air rather than to the north. The flowers expand and the fruits ripen above this umbrageous canopy, far away from mortal vision. Could the traveller float in a balloon over that aerial verdure, how glorious would be the sight! but otherwise it is beyond his reach. The lower region through which alone he can vend his way is unearthly from its monotony and fearful stillness. Only at distant intervals may he be startled by a crashing sound

which tells him that some forest monarch has ended a career of centuries, bringing down a thousand dependants in its fall, or a yet more startling scream proclaims the terror of some unseen victim to a beast of prey. But the interruption is but momentary, the sound ceases, and the forest resumes its wonted silence."

FRENCH MILITARY TAILORING.

"They do these things better in France," is often a grumble of John Bull's when contemplating his own Army arrangements. It appears, however, that the French are not a whit better than the English in the matter of frequent and fanciful changes in the soldier's dress and appointments, for, as the *Pall Mall Gazette* observes, since the beginning of the Second Empire there has been on the average an alteration every two years in military uniform. At one time the skirts of the tunics were lengthened, at another they were shortened; next the colour of the facings was changed, after that came the turn of the epaulets; and one day, soon after the Italian War, the triumphant idea occurred to some body of cutting off the skirts of the infantry altogether. Marshal Niel, however, had a weakness for skirts, and he was no sooner in office than he began to distribute skirted tunics to the infantry, as also new overcoats new epaulets, and ugly red shakos in place of the leather ones which the soldiers loved. Had he lived longer it was his intention to put the cavalry into tunics, and to abolish those smart lancer, cuirassier, and hussar uniforms which are the pride of the French Army. General Lebouf came in time to prevent this, and for the last two months has been quietly amending his predecessor's work according to his notions of the beautiful. The red shakos are to be discarded, the new tunics are to be changed again, the leather gaiters which the late Marshal has proscribed are to be adopted once more, and the bands which Marshal Niel had suppressed in cavalry regiments as an unnecessary expense are to be re-formed. We trust that sooner or later the perfection arrived at will be reached.

A correspondent at St. Petersburg, writing on the 18th, says:—"After endless delays and mistakes, the final preparations have at length been made for providing the whole of the Russian army with breech-loaders. Hitherto the only regiments which have been armed with the new weapon are those of the Grenadiers and the Guards, the other corps only having had a few served out to them for practice. The officials on the Warsaw railway have now been instructed to pass without question all the rifles as fast as they come in from Prussia, so that there may be no further delay in the matter. The number of rifles expected from Prussia is 500,000, and it is stated that the troops have now thoroughly learnt though not without great difficulty, the use of the new weapon. Every effort is also being made to render the army efficient in other respects. Both officers and soldiers are constantly employed in making trenches and other field fortification work; and a nocturnal sham fight is often got up, at which the troops are attacked while in the trenches by a supposed enemy. This sort of exercise has wonderfully developed the intelligence of the Russian soldier, who is now a far different being from what he was in the Crimea. The late inspections both in the kingdom of Poland and the empire have produced results which have filled with surprise the Russian generals of the old School, hitherto accustomed to look upon the soldier as a mindless machine."

DOMINION OF CANADA.



MILITIA GENERAL ORDERS.

HEAD QUARTERS.

Ottawa, 26th November, 1869.

GENERAL ORDER.

No. 1.

VOLUNTEER MILITIA.

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

Frontenac Squadron of Cavalry.

To be Major Commanding:

Major John Duff, from No. 1 Troop.

Ottawa Field Battery of Artillery.

First Lieutenant George Clarke having left the limits, is hereby removed from the list of the Volunteer Militia.

2nd Battalion "The Queen's Own Rifles,"
Toronto.

The resignation of Major and Paymaster, W. R. Harris, is hereby accepted, he being allowed to retire retaining his rank.

22nd Battalion "The Oxford Rifles,"
Woodstock.

To be Brevet Major:

Captain Hy. B. Beard of No. 1 Company, he having completed his five years service as Captain.

28th "Perth" Battalion of Infantry.

To be Captain:

Lieutenant and Adjutant David Scott.

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

Sherbrooke Troop of Cavalry.

To be Brevet Major:

Captain S. A. Stevens, he having completed his five years service as Captain.

4th Battalion "Chasseurs Canadiens,"
Montreal.

The services of Lieutenant C. Christin are hereby dispensed with.

St. Paul's Bay Infantry Company.

To be Lieutenant:

Joseph Gauthier, Gentleman, M.S., vice Bouchard, left the limits.

The resignation of Ensign E. Fortin is hereby accepted.

St. Eustache Infantry Company.

To be Ensign, provisionally:

Alphonse Daoust, Gentleman.

PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

The formation of the following Corps hereby authorized: