

It was in 1860 that the "National Rifle Association" was established, and it held its first meeting at Wimbledon in the same year. The formation of this body, and its annual meeting was the sequence to the introduction of the arm of precision into general use, and the inauguration of the Volunteer system. It soon grew into rapid favor with the public, and its progress and success are best shown, by the annual progressive advance in the value and the number of the prizes offered to competition, from the date of its establishment to 1864—the latest record of the proceedings of the Association that I can at present lay my hands on. In 1860 there were 67 prizes, value £2,238; in 1861, 93 prizes, value £3,026 8s.; in 1862, 140 prizes, value £3,334 13s.; in 1863, 333 prizes, value £4,386 6s. 6d.; in 1864, 627 prizes, value £5,918 12s.; in this year also, the total value of the prizes of the National and County Associations reached the large amount of £15,976 15s. The public entries to Wimbledon in 1864 were 20,253 persons, who benefited the funds of the Association to the tune of £5,727 2s. 7d.

The wise encouragement given to rifle shooting by the Association, has reacted on itself, and conduced to its present prosperous condition. It is a governing body of great power and influence, with which are affiliated all the County or minor Associations throughout the country, who contribute to its funds, and receive from it in return countenance and support. It serves as a Court of Appeal on all controverted questions, and it has promoted in various ways the great object of its formation, by raising up a race of riflemen that are unsurpassed in the world.

In 1864, at Wimbledon, no less than 72 persons made the highest possible scores, which means bull's-eyes for every shot—15 at 200 yards, 43 at 500 yards, 8 at 600 yards, and 6 at 800 yards. The previous year there were but 26 so noted. Lord Durie, with 150 rounds at 1,000 yards, only missed the target five times. Captain Lacy made ten consecutive bull's-eyes at 900 yards. Mr. Peterkin, in shooting for the Horatio Ross Prize, ran 500 yards, loaded and fired 12 times, and never missed the target or made an outer, but scored 11 bull's-eyes and one centre, or within one point of the maximum capable of being made. Sergeant Roberts, who won the Queen's Prize in 1863, made 12 bull's-eyes out of 15 shots, and Sergeant Graham, who stood next to him on the list, made 10. Private Wyatt, the winner of the Queen's Prize in 1864, had the honor of competing for it in its second stage for three years running, winning a Whitworth rifle and the silver badge of the Association in the years 1862, 1863, and 1864. Such are the products of the stimulus given to rifle shooting in England, and the deep interest taken in it by all classes of the population.

The shooting for the Queen's Prize, the "blue ribband" of the Association, and for which Volunteers alone are eligible, is of course the great feature of the meet. As the method of shooting for it, and the rewards distributed at the various stages may not be generally known to riflemen in this country, a few details respecting it may not prove uninteresting to your readers.

The Queen's Prize, of the value of £250, is given by Her Majesty annually for competition to the Volunteers. Every corps that connects itself with the parent Association can send two of its members up to Wimbledon for this purpose, provided always that they are efficient Volunteers, in accordance with the Volunteer Act. In 1864 there were 1,792 Volunteers who entered themselves for it, as against 1,145 of the previous

year. All who enter are permitted to fire at what is called the first stage of the proceedings, with five rounds at each of the distances of 200, 500 and 600 yards. At this stage the Enfield rifle alone is used. The sixty who stand highest on the list of scores are those only who are qualified to pass on to the next stage at 800, 900 and 1,000 yards—seven rounds at each range. Here the Whitworth rifle is the weapon authorized. The Volunteers who are thus permitted to try their chance for the great object of their ambition, which, when won, carries with it also the gold medal of the Association, receive the following graduated scale of rewards. He who heads the score gets the silver medal of the Association, £50 in money, and a Whitworth rifle valued at £15. The next 29 each obtain a Whitworth rifle, value £15, and £5 in money and the silver badge. Last year a Rugby rifle, valued at £20, was substituted for the Whitworth rifle. The following 30 receive each £5 and the silver badge. In 1864, 40 more, not qualified to go into the next stage, received £3 each in money, so that 100 Volunteers, all first-class shots, received a "solatium" of some kind or other. The scores made by the 100 thus distinguished ranged from 47 to 40. Now what would not our Volunteers do if they had encouragements of this kind to stimulate them to excellence?

The Volunteers who had entered for the first stage being thus eliminated and rewarded, the sixty who have proved themselves the "creme de la creme" of Volunteer riflemen now pass on to the second stage of the proceedings, and are watched with absorbing interest by the assembled thousands. With a fair field and no favor, the best shot carries off the prize so coveted by all keen sports. As soon as the winner of it is known, his name is sent flying over every telegraph wire throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom; and should his corps happen to be on the ground, he receives such an ovation as few are privileged to receive more than once in a lifetime, and very few even that. Last year the winner belonged to one of the Scotch Volunteer companies, and all Scotland was deeply moved thereby. On his return to his native place, it was as the return of a conqueror, and he received a public demonstration, the corps to which he belonged, of course, taking a prominent part in doing honor to their successful comrade.

Is it to be wondered at that rifle-shooting in the mother country has reached so high a standard of excellence, when we see it so stimulated and forwarded? The Queen and princes of the blood give it their countenance and support. The Houses of Peers and Commons each have their annual match. The high ones of the land, by position and wealth, take part. Prizes are given for competition with a lavish hand. Princes and peers, corporations and wealthy mercantile establishments, newspapers and tradesmen, vie with the other in giving them variety and value. With a feeling so wide-spread, and according so well with what may be called a national instinct, the whole country swarms with rifle ranges and butts, at which rifle practice is constant and incessant, with one end in view, and that is, qualification to enter the lists at Wimbledon. No Volunteer corps in England can be accepted unless it first satisfies the authorities on the subject of a proper rifle range and butts. With a feeling so universal and deep-seated on the part of the nation, so wisely fostered and encouraged by the Government and the influential classes, a whole population are being trained to the perfect use of the most

deadly weapon of modern times, and which, in practiced and cool hands, confident in its power and their skill, will give an advantage over mere numbers that the experience of the past justly warrants the fullest belief in.

In a future paper, with your permission, I shall endeavor to show what has been done in this country, what has been left undone, and what I think ought to be done to raise the standard of rifle shooting here, so that our young men might emulate those of their race and language, and take part with honor to their country in the great rifle Derby of England. Our sister colony, Australia, has already sent her riflemen there: it is not recorded that any Canadian Volunteer has ever sported his uniform within those renowned precincts. Let us hope that such will not always be the case. I will endeavor hereafter to show how this might be done with little cost to the country, and that it might liberally afford to assist what would do much to develop the latent talent that now lies dormant in it wanting any encouragement at all. We feel justified in having faith that similar efforts would produce like results in this country to what have taken place in the mother country.

#### WIMBLEDON SCORES.

To Editor of The Volunteer Review.

SIR,—As an encouragement to Canadian Volunteers and to give them an idea of what they would have to do to distinguish themselves at Wimbledon, I beg to lay before them, through the medium of your useful paper, the following scores of the Rifle Tournament in 1865;—the report for 1866 I have not yet received:—

In the 1st stage, "Queen's" [100 prizes]—in 5 shots, at 200, 500 and 600 yds., long Enfield rifles, the highest score was 47, and the lowest prize score 39, out of a possible score of 60 points; so that six less than centres takes a prize. In the 2nd stage, with Rigby rifles, 7 shots at 800, 900 and 1,000 yds. 64 points out of a possible 84 wins the much coveted £250 cup, gold medal and badge.

In the "International Enfield Trophy"—7 shots, at 200, 500 and 600 yds; 20 Scotchmen, with Enfield rifles, making an average of 52 each out of 84 possible, carry off this £1,000 prize, and only two of them hit every shot. I send you the score. Then again in the "Alexandra" prize—1st set [70 prizes]—in 5 shots at 200 yds., with Enfield rifle, 18 points was the highest, and 16 the lowest prize winner; and in the 2nd set—5 shots at 500 yds. [70 prizes]—16 points wins half [35] of these prizes.

In the "City of London" prizes [64]—1st set—in 5 shots, at 200 yds., with Government rifle, 19 was the highest, and 16 the lowest [£3] prize score; and in the 2nd set—64 prizes also—with the same conditions at 500 yds., 19 and 16 points took the highest and lowest respectively.

As 25 out of the 40 matches are confined to the Enfield or .577 bore rifle, and but 10 small bore prizes eligible to us, we would have no great cause to regret our lack of small bores and extended ranges to practice on. The 2nd stage, "Queen's"—7 shots—at 800, 900 and 1,000 yds., was once carried off by one who had never previously fired at a longer range than 600 yds.

I am confident Canadians could take an honorable place at Wimbledon; for scores similar to the above are by no means strangers at our rifle matches. It must also be borne in mind that the scores at Wimbledon are greatly improved by the many conveniences of which we have not hitherto availed