

from their homes, and in Edinburgh on private business. The lately married wife of one of these gentlemen, and the widowed mother of the other, sent the arms, uniforms and chargers of the two troopers, that they might join their companions at Dalkeith. The author was very much struck by the answer made to him by the last mentioned lady, when he paid her some compliment on the readiness which she showed in equipping her son with the means of meeting danger, when she might have left him a fair excuse for remaining absent. "Sir," she replied, with the spirit of a Roman matron, "none can know better than you that my son is the only prop by which, since his father's death, our family is supported. But I would rather see him dead on that hearth, than hear that he had been a horse's length behind his companions in the defence of his king and country!" The author mentions what was immediately under his own eye, and within his own knowledge; but the spirit was universal wherever the alarm reached, both in Scotland and England.

The account of the ready patriotism displayed by the country on this occasion, warmed the hearts of Scottishmen in every corner of the world. It reached (in India) the ears of the well-known Dr. Deyden, whose enthusiastic love of Scotland, and of his own district of Teviotdale, formed a distinguished part of his character. The account, which was read to him when on a sick-bed, stated (very truly) that the different corps, on arriving at their alarm-posts, announced themselves by their music playing the tunes peculiar to their own districts, many of which have been gathering-signals for centuries. It was particularly remembered, that the Liddesdale men, before mentioned, entered Kelso playing the lively tune—

O wha dare meddle wi' me!
And wha dare meddle wi' me!
My name it is little Jock Elliot,
And wha dare meddle wi' me!

The patient was so delighted with this display of ancient Border spirit, that he sprung up in his bed, and began to sing the old song with such vehemence of action and voice, that his attendants, ignorant of the cause of excitation, concluded that the fever had taken possession of the brain; and it was only the entry of another Borderer, Sir John Malcolm, and the explanation which he was well qualified to give, that prevented them from resorting to means of medical coercion.

Although this exhibition of the volunteer spirit was confined to a province, it was generally accepted as a satisfactory proof of the soundness of the national heart on the occasion. Everybody was rejoiced to think that, if real danger should arise, there would be no lack of courage to meet the enemy, whatever might be the chances of the encounter. So happy an affair did the False Alarm thus prove, that those wise people who see further than their neighbors, were all convinced that it had been got up deliberately, in order to put the volunteers to a sort of test. But this was a mistake of the very wise people. The whole affair originated simply in the misinterpretation of some accidental light, as above narrated.

HALF-PAY OF OFFICERS.—We are given to understand that it is contemplated to improve the half-pay of officers on the Captains and Commander's Lists. We are very glad to hear it, and only hope that the officers on the Reserved and Retired Lists will not be excluded from "the benefit of the act."

NOTES ON THE DEFENCE OF CANADA.

No. IV.

The new phase of political existence on which the British Provinces of North America are about to enter renders the consideration of the question of their defence one of paramount importance, and doubtless measures towards that end will be submitted at the first session of the House of Commons. As it is one of those vital questions on which the future stability of the institutions of the people essentially rests, and in which they have more than ordinary interest, its discussion beforehand will be no breach of etiquette or good sense. Indeed, the people of the British American Provinces are peculiarly circumstanced with reference to this question of defence; because it is utterly out of their power to maintain any thing like a standing army, and as military service is imperative on each individual, it behoves the whole community to know how the duty their country requires can be most efficiently and economically discharged.

The extent of country to be defended demands the services of every man capable of bearing arms. Nor can this duty be delegated to any one class, presenting in this respect a marked difference to other countries where sections of the population find lucrative employment in the army. In Canada the whole period of military service is an individual and personal sacrifice, therefore the question of organization must be approached with considerable caution. It should embrace every man between the ages of fifteen and sixty years, without any exemption beyond physical disability; but service out of the locality should be voluntary. No division of the service into fancy classes should be allowed, but every man should be encouraged in the idea that he would be liable to march at an hour's notice in defence of his country.

The full military stores belonging to each battalion should be placed at its headquarters; and by making the municipal authorities accountable, sufficient provision would be made for their conservation. Under the existing organization, individuals are obliged to perform the duties properly belonging to the state, at great expense to themselves, without any reward, or hope thereof, the whole service being voluntary. To obtain a commission in the Canadian service, it is necessary to serve without pay; to raise the force to be commanded at individual expense, and to make good any loss of stores or equipments supplied very scantily by the Government, and to bear all expenses consequent on keeping men who serve voluntarily together. This is not fair or just, especially as officers that take the trouble of qualifying themselves are practically excluded from the highest staff appointments, by the employment of officers of the imperial service. Now, there is no fact more patent than, in the event of a war, these Provinces must be defended by the people or not at all, as far as that can be done by a military force. Great Britain could not spare us more than 25,000 men, and in view of European complications, not even so large a number. Under these circumstances it is necessary to give those gentlemen who have qualified themselves a fair share of staff appointments, as they will be obliged

to encounter all the risks, and have really the greatest interests at stake.

As the defence of the country must depend on no proper selection of positions, and not on military manoeuvres, a large development of the artillery arm is an essential condition of thorough and effective organization; and that development must consist in something more than merely clothing a given number in artillery uniform and drilling them as riflemen. A staff corps would be also a necessity. Sufficient material of the best possible quality exists for its formation. In fact, the organization must partake, in every particular, of the correspondent grades and arms of the regular service to be effective. Moreover, in the choice and equipment of this force, no difference whatever should exist between officers and men and the corresponding grades in the regular army—the device and the button should alone mark the difference. Fancy tailoring has prevailed in military circles lately, and it is perhaps an evidence of the advanced taste of the times; but apart from every other consideration, the Canadian Militia are entitled by long and valiant service to wear the royal uniform, and they do not want to be "distinguished" otherwise on the field.

Coming events are generally foreshadowed, and it is far from impossible that the cession of the Russian possessions on this continent to the United States may not bring up grave and complicated questions leading to the last "argument of kings." Whether such a contingency is possible or probable, it is nevertheless the duty of the state to make such preparations as will render the country independent of the forbearance of our neighbors. As a simple colony, the Washington politicians would look on us without fear or envy; because, when arrived at adolescence, we might be willing to cut loose from our mother's leading strings and take our chance in the world of the great republic; but it is quite another matter when, instead of setting up for ourselves, we choose to be partners in the old firm, and make ourselves subject to all the liabilities of the position.

FOREIGN MILITARY NEWS.

SANDWICH ISLANDS.—A despatch from San Francisco, dated Feb. 19, says that Capt. Turnour, of the British Navy, and Rear-Admiral Thatcher, of the United States Navy, have been decorated with the Order of King Kamehameha, for courtesies extended to Queen Emma while on board their respective ships.

BREECH-LOADING SMALL ARMS.—A trial of an extraordinary nature took place at the Government grounds at Vincennes lately. The arm used was invented by Mr. F. W. Prince, of London. Four hundred rounds were fired. The first 60 rounds at 800 metres were fired by Mr. Prince. One hundred rounds were then fired by a serjeant of the Chasseurs Vincennes, appointed by the Committee. The remaining 240 rounds were then fired by Mr. Prince at 200 metres in 23 minutes. Every shot struck the target. The use of water from a soldier's tin canteen was permitted. Not one cartridge missed fire throughout the 400 shots, and the rifle at the finish worked as easily as at the beginning. Four hundred shots had previously been fired from the same arm by different officers on the Committee.