

"K" COMPANY QUEEN'S OWN RIFLES.

We reproduce from the *Mail* the following excellent historical sketch of this organization, so much discussed of late :

A report was circulated a few days ago among the militia officers of the city that the authorities contemplated the abolition of the University Company of the Queen's Own Rifles, and that "K" would in the near future parade as an ordinary down-town company of the regiment, and would be no longer composed of the students of the university. Many ex-officers and ex-members of the company expressed their sincere regret that such a course should be taken, and enquiry at headquarters gave them little hope of being able to give old "K" a new lease of life. The authorities seem to be hardly aware of the magnitude of the opposition which their action is likely to arouse among the large body of prominent military men scattered over the whole province who began their connection with the Canadian volunteer force in the ranks of what was at first known as the University Rifle Company.

The company was formed during the excitement caused by the Trent affair in 1861, which may be said to have given birth to the present volunteer system of Canada. At the news of the possibility of war between Great Britain and the United States, offers of military service came from all parts of the country. Among the companies then formed was one consisting of professors and students of University College. The meeting at which the resolutions for the organization of such a company was passed was held in Convocation hall, and presided over by Rev. Dr. McCaul, then president of University College. The first officers chosen were Prof. H. H. Croft as captain, Prof. J. B. Cherriman as lieutenant, and Mr. Adam Crooks (afterwards Minister of Education for Ontario) as ensign; and among the privates enrolled were Sir Daniel (then Professor) Wilson, Prof. Buckland, and Mr. William Mulock, now vice-chancellor of the university. The first uniform chosen was light grey, the company being then independent. In 1862 the company was incorporated with the Queen's Own Rifles, when the present uniform was adopted. In 1864 the company obtained the first prize offered by Col. Mountain, inspecting officer, for the most efficient and complete company in Canada.

When the Fenians invaded Canada in June, 1866, the company sent to the front 49 officers and men, of whom, however, only 29 were present at the skirmish which took place at Limeridge on June 2nd, the greater portion of the members having left Toronto for their various homes at the close of the examinations in May. They were led into action by the late Lieutenant Whitney, both Prof. Croft and Prof. Cherriman being detained in Toronto by order of the Government. They advanced farther towards the enemy than any other portion of the force in action, driving the enemy's left flank before them, and thus being the last to whom the order to retire was given. They lost three killed, four wounded, and three prisoners, as shown in the following list:—Killed, Ptes. Malcolm Mackenzie, J. H. Mewburn, and William F. Tempest. Wounded, Ptes. W. H. Vander-Smissen, R. E. Kingsford, E. G. Patterson, and E. T. Paul; taken prisoners, Corp. T. D. Delamere, Lance-Corp. W. H. Ellis, Pte. David Junor. The prisoners not wounded were taken to Fort Erie, where they were abandoned on the approach of the troops. The University company also took part in the rebellion in the North-West in 1885. The Queen's Own formed part of the column despatched under Lieut.-Col. Otter for the relief at Battleford. A successful engagement with the Indian chief Poundmaker took place on May 2nd at Cut Knife creek, in which a detachment of "K" Co. took part. On this occasion Pte. Lloyd was seriously wounded in rescuing a fallen comrade.

The following is a list of former officers of the company, an examination of which will show that most of them have since become prominent in the civil or military affairs of the country: H. H. Croft, captain 1861-67; J. B. Cherriman, lieutenant 1861-67, captain 1867-72; Adam Crooks, ensign 1861-65; W. C. Campbell, ensign 1865; W. F. Davison, lieutenant 1866-67; W. H. Ellis, ensign 1867, lieutenant 1868-72, captain 1882-85; T. D. Delamere, ensign 1867, lieutenant 1867-72, captain 1872; W. H. Vander-Smissen, lieutenant 1872-85, captain 1875-78; R. E. Kingsford, ensign 1872; Thos. Langton, ensign 1872-75, lieutenant 1875-78;

Alfred Baker, lieutenant 1875-78, captain 1878-80; F. F. Manley, lieutenant 1878; George Acheson, lieutenant 1878; J. M. Delamere, captain 1886-87; E. F. Gunther, lieutenant 1884-88; G. A. Badgerow, lieutenant 1886-90; H. Brock, captain 1888-90. The present officers of the company are Captain Rennie and Lieutenants Coleman, Baker and White.

Naturally after a flourishing existence of 30 years in connection with the university, and an enrollment during that time of many names which afterwards become prominent in the affairs of the country, a feeling of deep regret is aroused among not only those who have been connected with the company, but also among all the graduates and undergraduates of the university who have an interest in the maintenance of its institutions. Since the first of February, 1890, when all the arms and accoutrements of "K" went up in smoke, the company has had a struggle to regain old-time efficiency and strength. During the season which has just closed, however, owing to the untiring efforts of its junior officers, the company has almost fully revived, and it now appears as if an era of the greatest prosperity would follow the recent period of disorganization. With such prospects, such a history, a record of remarkable vigor and efficiency, and so many ex-members and ex-officers now upon the militia rolls of the Dominion, it would be a pity indeed if its contemplated severance from the Provincial University is effected.

SOLDIERS AND SPIRITS.

In Surgeon Mann's (U.S.A.) "Medical Sketches of the War of 1812," he gives the following as his experience of the effect of the free use of alcoholic beverages by the American soldiers of that day.

"Examples may be furnished to demonstrate, that ardent spirits are a useless part of a soldier's ration. At those periods, during the revolutionary war, when the army received no pay for their services, and possessed not the means to procure spirits, it was healthy. The 4th Massachusetts regiment at that eventful period, of which I was the surgeon, lost in three years, by sickness, not more than 5 or 6 men. It was at a time when the army was destitute of money. During the winter of 1779-80, there was only one occurrence of fever in the regiment; and that was a pneumonia of a mild form. It was observable the last war, from December 1814, to April 1815, the soldiers at Plattsburgh were not attacked with fevers as they had been the preceding winters. The troops, during this period, were not paid; a fortunate circumstance to the army; arising from a want of funds. This embarrassment, which was considered a national calamity, proved a blessing to the soldier. When he is found poor in money, it is always the case that he abounds in health. A fact worth recording.

"Deserters from the British army, of whom some hundreds came to our posts, exhibited marks of high health; while those of our soldiers were pallid and emaciated. The difference was too obvious to have escaped the observation of the officers of the army. It led me to seek the cause. Upon enquiry it was learned that spirits were no part of the ration of the British soldier; that these liquors could not be procured in the upper province of Canada for money. While, in addition to their daily rations, our soldiers, when they had money in their pockets, has free access to spirits at the stores of the sutlers.

"Diseases and mortality generally, but not necessarily, followed the pay-masters of the army. With means to make themselves comfortable, soldiers frequently render their lives wretched.

An unusually interesting exhibit in the Canadian section of the World's Fair will be a collection of 584 military buttons, artistically arranged on a shield. They have been obtained from the clothing of British officers, representative of every branch of the Imperial service, by Mr. W. H. Love, of St. John, N.B., and it took him nine years to collect them. The authorities of the British Museum are now corresponding for the purchase of the shield, as there is not supposed to be another collection as complete as this in the world.