

CORRESPONDENCE.

VOLUNTEERS AND MILITIA.

Concluded.

For Cavalry and Artillery I am not competent to speak. I know we have not enough of either one or the other, besides making no pretence whatever, we have no organized Commissariat or Quartermaster's Dep't, Land Transport or Medical Dep't., or a Medical Staff Corps. I have heard it said by those who have experienced it, that whiskey and salt herrings are very bad rations for marching on, and that a blanket stretched across a couple of poles is not a very comfortable conveyance for a man with a bad cut in his leg. But we hope all these things will be remedied by the new Militia Bill, which a good many of us think we might have got leave to have seen before now.

There is one feature of the Swiss organization (the best one of the European system in my mind) which has already been introduced with great advantage into some of the public schools in England, and which could with still greater advantage be introduced into Canada, that is, having a certain amount of drill and gymnastics taught in all the common schools of the Dominion; thus utilizing for this purpose the non-productive age of the youth of the country. All boys like soldiering, it is their own favorite game, and if a portion of two days in each week was set apart for and devoted to these exercises, the boys would be improved, mentally, morally and physically. There need be no difficulty in making this start now. Let it be made law this session of Parliament, that all boys attending school for three hours in the week, in the Extension Motions and Facings, and in squad and company drill, without arms, and let the Government grant be withheld from those sections that will not come under the rule.

Nearly every School Section in Canada can now furnish an instructor, most of whom would gladly give their services free of charge to the little fellows, but next year let it be imperative that all teachers shall themselves be competent to impart this instruction. Here then you will lay a foundation which will be never forgotten, and which will serve the lads hereafter in any position of life, besides training them to those habits of obedience and subordination, which fit them at once to take their places with friends and brothers in the ranks of the Militia, as soon as they come to the age for bearing arms.

I know, Mr. Editor, that there are thousands in the country to whom all these things are new, who have scarcely ever given a thought to the change made in July last, nor the responsibilities which Canada took upon her shoulders, when she started house-keeping that fine Monday morning. Knowing this I am sorry to see so little effort made to educate the people to what they will for the future have to do for themselves, for with the exception of Mr. McGee's letter upon national defences, no other attempt has been made by any man of mark that I am aware of, to let Canadians see what is before them, or arouse them to the fact that the Dominion is the nucleus of a nation.

After all Mr. McGee was not far astray, although he was abused by the Grits, and got but a cold shoulder from the Conservatives, for a country that cannot afford to keep up a standing army, must have a well organized Militia, which is nothing more or less than what he advocated—an armed people.

Britain has told us plainly she is with us to her last guinea and her last soldier (Mr. Mill, Goldwin Smith, John Bright, and all that clan to the contrary notwithstanding), but equally plainly has she told us—"You Canadians who boast so much of your loyalty must show us at home that you are prepared to do your share." Now the men of Canada are ready and willing to do their share, more than that, they are determined the Dominion shall be British, but, what of our leaders? what of those to whom the destinies of the country have been entrusted for the last ten years? who should be giving tone to, and moulding public opinion at this very critical time? why do they make no sign? Are they, too, of those who hold the belief, that as we can only be brought into a quarrel through our connection with Britain, the quarrel being an Imperial one, the expense should be born by the Imperial Government. I have heard such arguments and I fear there are not a few of the leading politicians of Canada who would wait and throw the whole burden of defence upon the Mother Country, and with this hope, that affecting or holding this belief they are justified in doing nothing, and thus, that, when a crisis did come, the country being defenceless would be helpless, and the people would have neither heart nor means to remedy the treason. (I trust, however, we would manage to get time enough to secure and hang the traitors).

There are others of the John Bright School, the peace at any price men, who are steadily opposed to any expenditure for military purposes; and there are others still who think more of their Durham Bulls, or the pelt of a Leicester ram, than of Colonial good faith to the honor of the Dominion. Things who whine out (they are not men) Oh 'tis no use to go to any expense about Militia matters, we can't fight the United States, they could pour 50,000 men into the country in twenty-four hours, we will only irritate and annoy them if we go about arming and organizing our Militia, or mounting guns, or throwing up breastworks. "Oh you need not tell me, I know all you would say, that they don't care about our feelings, and that our feelings over the Fenian raid of 1866 was fun to them, and that they are mounting more guns at Buffalo, and heavier ones at Fort Montgomery, and that they are fortifying Mackinac, and that they have forbidden our vessels the navigation of Lake Michigan, 'tis all true I can say, but there is no danger, and if there was there is no use in us attempting to defend Canada." Such is the language held by some from whom better things might be expected of men who from their presence are a curse to the country, besides giving the impression that Mr. Seward is getting as good value for that portion of the Yankee secret service money expended in Canada, as he has received in Nova Scotia. 'Tis the language and logic of Canada.

I heard of an argument once used by a Volunteer, when discussing this very question of Militia organization with a farmer who was very well off, a little close fisted, and did not like to hear of money being spent upon the Volunteers, which I think is apropos to this part of my letter. "What would you say, old man, to your son, if after he got married and you had given him the

deed of his land, stocked his farm for him, and helped him to crop it, that he was not man enough to take care of his own house. If after a few months house keeping he was to come running over to the old homestead, and cry, oh, you will have to send me three or four policemen to take care of that farm you gave me. It is in a bad settlement, and my neighbor is bad an quarrelsome, and he acts just as if he wanted to put me off the place altogether, and take it himself; and I don't like fighting; and I have no money to buy a gun, and besides, if I had a gun, I don't know how to shoot." What would you say old man, was the query, if this son of yours would act in this manner? Here was the reply, short and sharp: D—n the coward he is no son of mine, he is a disgrace to the old name and to the old stock; why man a girl of mine would have pluck enough to defend her own home with a broomstick."

Now, Mr. Editor, was not the Volunteer's allegory fairly drawn? Here has Britain this last seven years been holding out the Enfields for Canada, and here have been our commanding officers for the same time, shivering at the thought of having to handle them, or saying, with the farmer's son, oh, if we took the guns we might have to pay for them, and besides, if we had them, we don't know how to shoot. War is a dreadful calamity, and may the good Lord avert it, but there are even worse calamities than war, and to be crushed by such a despotism as that under which 'ho South is now groaning, would be worse than death to a free people.

We have got then to make up our minds to the responsibilities of independence; we have got to do as all free countries have done before us, organize our defences, be prepared to take our own part, and bear the cost of it, or else make up our minds to live upon sufferance till our big and hungry neighbor will have time to gobble us up, and then pay, in less than ten years, of their taxation, more money than would have enabled us to hold him at bay, till he got his fill of fighting, besides giving him such a taste of what war was along his own borders, as would have kept him quiet for another fifty years.

ANOTHER VOLUNTEER.

THE JERSEY MILITIA.

To the Editor of THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

SIR:—For weeks past I have noticed numberless communications on the Militia, and without any pretension on my part to advise or recommend any particular system, will give you an outline of a system under which I was brought up in my native island, in which I served from the age of 16 to 32. It is a system that has worked well for a century, and has never been materially changed; the principle remains the same. I speak of the Royal Jersey Militia. In that Island as well as the sister Islands, every man that is fit must serve from the age of 16 to 60; at 45 he can claim his discharge from the active but must go to the reserve until 60. Every year about the first week in March the Sergeant Instructor of every parish in the Island, goes to the office where the registry of births for his parish is kept, and copies all the names of the boys who have then attained their 16th year, and has them all warned to appear at the drill shed