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The Volunteer Review,

AND

MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

"Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard the Monarch, fence the Law."

OTTAWA, MONDAY, JULY 15, 1872.

LIEUT. COLONEL WAINSWRIGHT GRIFFITHS, at present on a tour through British Columbia, has kindly consented to act as the Agent for the *VOLUNTEER REVIEW* in that Province.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as Communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be *pre-paid*. Correspondents will also bear in mind that one end of the envelope should be left open, and in the corner the words "Printer's copy" written, and a two or five cent stamp (according to the weight of the communication) placed thereon will pay the postage.

THE period of annual drill of our *Volunteer* force is usually a season of great activity amongst newspaper critics—the *war* correspondents of the different Journals find a rich field for the exercise of their imaginations and a display of the skill possessed in the use of the usual stock phrases of a "galling fire," "steady advance," "strategetical skill," and "overwhelming charge"—all very pretty and graphic in their way, but not particularly lucid or calculated to give the mere outsider any idea of the operations really performed.

Apart from the mere tactical manœuvres attempted to be described which is undoubt-

edly amusing if not instructive; the annual assemblage of the military force of Canada is productive of one decidedly good effect in placing its proficiency under public scrutiny, and however diverse the opinions of parties may be on the system or its administration, there is but one opinion of its entire success so far as the mere training of effective soldiers is concerned.

Any opposition which the Volunteer movement has met with has been from the organs of the commercial classes in the great cities, and it is the more extraordinary because they are precisely the parties most likely to suffer the first evils of a successful raid.

It is evident that the pitiful loss of the time of an employé engaged in acquiring the knowledge necessary to defend their property is of more consequence to their minds being a present loss than any possible contingency.

On the other hand the most steady supporters of the system are to be found amongst our agriculturists, and they have relatively less to lose and are in far less danger than the populations of our cities, inasmuch as it would take more time to plunder a dozen farm houses than one hundred city stores, the risk would be greater and the spoil hardly worth it.

Of the value set on our military system the following from the *Brampton Times* will give a fair illustration, and it describes the actual position of the force as well as the duty of the Public towards it most accurately:

"The annual drills for the Ontario quota of the Dominion Volunteer force for 1872 have assumed in the several camps of instruction such proportions, and displayed so marked an improvement in military discipline and *clan*, that we do not hesitate to assert that the active militia of the Dominion, if the battalions in the other Provinces are equally well up in their duties, will, in a very few years, demonstrate the correctness of the oft disputed opinion 'that a country can be more economically and quite as efficiently protected by a volunteer force as by the maintenance of a standing army'—*i. e.*, provided the rank and file receive that liberal and considerate treatment which, whilst it is simply their due, is essential to render the service popular, and the officers are stimulated to perfect themselves in the details of military science by being accorded honorary rank in public opinion and Governmental consideration on a par with the regular service. The camp at Niagara this year afforded a very good example of what may be effected under our volunteer system. Over 7,000 men were assembled and kept at hard work for 16 consecutive days, by this means acquiring an intimate acquaintance with the ordinary routine of camp duties, company and battalion drill, and what is of infinitely more consequence, familiarity with manœuvres and movements *en masse* on the mimic field of battle. It is true that experience of this kind will not turn volunteers into bronzed and scarred veterans, but it qualifies them to hold their own against any force likely to be thrown across the frontier of the filibustering type, and renders the Dominion practically invulnerable from that quarter. The benefits that will ultimately be secured by these annual drillings in camp ought to be seen to be appreciated thoroughly, but the

public have gained a tolerable idea of the utility of such mode of military instruction by the graphic descriptions of the journalists of the sham battle at Niagara on the 24th June, in which both the defending and attacking brigades acquitted themselves so admirably, that military critics have pronounced that field day a decided success. The experience gained likewise by the artillery and rifle practice during the sixteen days must not be overlooked in estimating the advantages of camps of instruction, nor the less interesting but useful exercises of striking, packing and pitching tents, &c., &c. The force is, moreover, inured to a considerable degree for the stern realities of actual warfare, and acquires that confidence and aptitude in exigencies which forms a solid foundation in military education. The volunteer force ought to be the pride of the whole Dominion, and it is gratifying to note that the interest in its well doing is yearly increasing, as evidenced by the attendance of visitors at Niagara this year, being fully ten times as large as it was in 1871, one-third at least being of the gentler sex, who love the spirit-stirring display of the tented field."

It is evident that the question of *increased compensation* to that class of our population who have an aptitude for military life is the true policy for this country. We object altogether to the idea of compulsory service, and we can see no reason whatever why the parties whose goods and chattels are watched and protected should not pay for the service.

Those who are opposed to the present system are evidently of the same opinion as the following from the *Ottawa Citizen* will shew:

"The volunteer system is at present the theme of every military man throughout the country, and we have heard a great many officers express it as their opinion that the turn out for next year's drill will be a failure unless some new feature is introduced. Three suggestions are offered to maintain the strength of our military system. First, increased pay; second, the ballot; third, a change of camps. This last suggestion appears to meet with most favour, and it is thought that if the volunteers of Central Canada were sent into camp at Windsor, and Western volunteers brought down to Central Canada, there would be a capital turnout, on account of the novelty of the thing, and the opportunity it would afford of an excursion trip for nothing. From all quarters we hear satisfaction expressed at the quantity and quality of the rations this year, and the attention paid to the comfort of the men, and we think that perhaps the fears expressed by officers will not be verified when the order comes for next year's turn out."

Our contemporary in recording the sayings of "a great many officers of the force," is merely repeating a stereotyped set of sibilant utterances, the formula for which have existed for the last ten years, and the prophets are in no-wise daunted that each succeeding muster was better than its predecessor.

Such opinions are merely held by men who believe they could organize a far superior force on the principle of compulsion, and it only proves their own want of knowledge of the feelings and genius of the great mass of their countrymen.

We do not believe "next year's turn out for drill will be a failure unless some new