

"Is the use of a soldier that can't shoot?"

2nd. How should he be taught to shoot?

3rd. Why should not an officer have a rifle?

4th. How many Canadian Volunteers can judge distance?

5th. Is there any benefit in small bore shooting?

6th. There are a good many Martini-Henry's in the country—why are they not more used by their owners?

7th. What is being done to improve rifle shooting in this country.

8th. What has the Dominion Rifle Association accomplished in this way? and winds up by assuming that our columns are devoted to matters of dress and drill instead of rifles, steel barrels, drawn bullets, targets, trajectory and lots of kindred subjects.

If "R" had attentively read the *Volunteer Review* it would be plain to his perception that more information, on the very subjects he so slipperily assumes we neglected, is to be found in its columns than in that of any military paper in existence; and in support of this assertion we could call in the testimony of some of the most distinguished officers of the British Army; but as our correspondent has wittingly or unwittingly opened a question of great importance to the the Canadian Army, we have no hesitation in answering his queries put in the not very courteous phraseology of his communication.

1st. In the composition of an army the soldiers that *can't shoot* (which we take to mean a man that make bull's eyes or centres with every shot at 600 yards) is often more useful than the individual who can.

If an army can boast of 33 per cent of the whole force as *marksmen*, it is exceptionally strong with respect to shooters; and "R" must have paid no attention to the articles on the papers read at various times before the Royal United Service Institute, which have appeared in our columns, or the reports of the officers of the German Army dealing with this very question.

The rank and file of an army comprises necessarily all grades of intellect, and as *man* is not born equal in any respect, notwithstanding the declaration of independence, it must follow that other qualities beside quickness of perception and steadiness of nerve will distinguish the mass of the items of which it is compared. Experience has taught the lesson that physical endurance is fully as great a requisite in the composition of the soldier as those qualities that make him a good shot, and if he can be brought to *charge with the bayonet*, and not be afraid of the consequences, he is like to do quite as much, if not more, to win a battle than the crack marksman who can make nineteen points out of a possible twenty. Neither are battles won by the mere effect of correct shooting alone, but by the skill with which the mass of troops are thrown on decisive points of the enemy's position. After an

action commences in earnest there is little opportunity and less need for a display of individual skill with the rifle, the smoke and constant changing of distances puts the best and most accomplished marksman out; and the very fact that only six per cent. of rifle bullets are effective, and that it takes as much lead to kill a man as he will weigh, is proof positive that in this respect at least the rifle has nothing to boast over the old musket—Brownless—and that its real use is in the hands of the *shooters* of an army to keep artillery at a distance and make certain zones of fire dangerous, such zones lying between four and six hundred yards—sixty-six per cent. at least of any army would be more incapable of taking a more profitable position in a skirmish line—but thoroughly competent to charge a line, storm a battery, or capture artillery within their range as well as throw up field work and perform all the other duties under discipline which a campaign demands. The soldier that *can't shoot* is as quite as useful as the soldier that can, and his necessary complement.

2nd. The rules for teaching a soldier to shoot are to be found in the red book, and are too well known to men engaged in military service to need description.

3rd. An officer's duty is not to be discharged by using a rifle in action he commands his men, and if he performs that duty well he will be fully employed. He is also accountable for their lives in action, and it will exercise the whole of his wits to enable him to properly complete the operation he is engaged in, without an unnecessary waste of life. The present company of 55 officers and men is quite large enough for three officers to look after. The duty of the captain is to command the whole, of the lieutenant to see that his orders are carried out, and of the ensign with the supernumeraries to attend to the supply of ammunition, the removal and care of the wounded. If those duties are discharged properly no officer will have time to play the fool with a rifle.

4th. The answer to this query is that such a question in statistics is not known; but as Canadian Volunteers are presumed to have brains as well as others, about the same number can judge distance as those who are marksmen.

5th. To our mind there is no benefit whatever to be derived from the practice of "Small bore shooting," and we have condemned it in every case as a mistake, a delusion, a mockery, and a snare in military practice. If our correspondent had read the *Review* attentively, he would find how easily the celebrated Tyrolean marksmen in the Austrian service were disposed of by the French rank and file armed with a very inferior weapon at the battle of Solferino. The only weapon permitted at a rifle match should be the Regulation Rifle, any other is a positive nuisance.

6th. Our correspondent had better ask the

owners of the *Martini-Henry* rifles for a reply to this question. If it is meant as an *incendo* against the weapon, it only shows a want of knowledge of its value.

7th. Our correspondent should make his meaning clear. We will answer this interrogatory by another question. Can rifle shooting be improved? So far as practice goes there is no evidence to show that the query need be put—all the machinery for the purpose is in practice—and the "General Orders" of the Canadian Army furnish a proper detail of every part.

8th. For answer to this query we must refer our correspondent to the report of the "Dominion Rifle Association," of which we dare say our gallant friend the Secretary Lieut Colonel Stewart, Assistant Adj. General of Militia Department Ottawa, would not object to give him a copy, if he applies for it in the proper way.

As to the *ola podrida* with which our correspondent closes his letter, we have neither time nor inclination to enter into such a discussion, desiring that matters of dress and drill, especially the latter, are of more importance to the rank and file than questions affecting the armourer and scientific officers of the service.

Our readers will be instructed in the following, which we republish from the *United States Army and Navy Journal* of 15th November.

"New York State has purchased eight Gatling guns, to be distributed among the troops of the First and Second divisions. At this time we cannot state how these guns are to be disposed of—whether they will be attached to the different infantry commands or take the place of the mounted batteries. The present condition of the howitzer batteries of the First division is rather low, and the inspector-General may recommend their disbandment; still we do not think this policy advisable, for in the National Guard howitzer batteries are less expensive to the State, and their utility over the mounted batteries, as at present organized, is plain to any one who understands the uses of a National Guard in large cities. There is a disposition on the part of the few of the infantry commands of the First division to organize howitzer batteries, and the Seventh has already an efficient howitzer section attached to the regiment, the men being detailed for this duty. On the occasion of the Seventh's encampment at Saratoga the howitzer section was very popular, and won deserving praise for the excellence of its duty. Last season this section devoted considerable time to drill, and gave several informal exhibitions at the armory, and the men seemed to 'take' remarkably to the change from the monotonous infantry drill. The Ninth is now organizing a howitzer section, and manifest interest is taken in the 'new development.'"

"The introduction of the Gatling, in the National Guard shows that New York is progressive, and the organization of Gatling batteries will be an new and welcome feature to the State service. Our Government is now having these guns thoroughly tested, and with the most striking and satisfactory results. The appearance of a Gatling gun or battery in our streets on parade will be