

grudge the time to attend, and they would without doubt do great benefit to the force.

Therefore in the interests of both officers and men, I would suggest that the number of sergeant-instructors at each school be increased, and that as many as possible be detailed for duty at different cities, towns, or headquarters of regiments, where at stated periods in each year they could hold classes of instruction for those wishing to obtain certificates, to which also might be admitted others desirous of brushing up.

Yours,

BEAVER.

AN EVIL AND A REMEDY.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE,—Ever and again there appears in the various papers, militia and otherwise, published throughout the country, short paragraphs which afford me great pleasure to observe and peruse. Though the paragraphs, for their briefness naught else they merit to be called, are short and very infrequently appear at that, until lately, which is evidence that there exists somewhere a piece of leaven which it is hoped will not cease working until the whole lump is leavened, yea like a sleeping volcano break forth some day and awaken the country from apparently a dull, stupid sleep of ignorance there is in respect to a serious evil existing in the Militia Force of our beloved country.

Not only have observations of this evil been on several occasions made by your much esteemed paper (THE MILITIA GAZETTE), to which much credit is due for its many excellent suggestions made, from time to time, and ever readiness for the advancement and improvement of our Militia Force; but others, ordinary newspapers, which take little, if any, interest in Militia matters, and as a matter of course by anti-Militia papers.

The argument that there exists not anything in this world of wickedness pure and without blemish, and consequently the Militia ought not to be looked for to be an exception, might be put forth in this cause by some—whom one may style those who uphold or tolerate the existing of evil and facilitate the protection thereof, therefore whose ways are ditto? according to the maxim "evil begets evil." But no such argument can be applied in this case.

The evil to which I am alluding is the enormous number of some eight hundred (800) commissions held in the militia by unqualified persons therefor. Enormous do I say? Yes, sir, and such none can deny to be true.

Now, to the question, which may suggest itself to some of the readers hereof, what does eight hundred (800) of the aforesaid commissions mean? I will reply by another, that is, is there an answer other than that it means that there are licensed by the Government to don the uniform of an officer and attempt to instruct in that which is foreign to them, a squad, company or battalion, etc., as the case may be, to which they have been appointed, of volunteers, eight hundred (800) men who are without certificates of qualification, cannot produce the same, non-qualified therefor, and am I to forego saying unfit for the position they hold?

The evil results which may ensue are of such prodigious and serious a nature that they cannot be passed by unobserved and in silence, viz., results and consequences of eight hundred (800) men, unqualified as officers, having the authority to don the uniform of an officer and lead men to battle in the event of our country being embroiled in war, be that civil, offensive or defensive, and her loyal sons called upon in her behalf to face the foe, in many a long and hard contested field where our soldiers would have to confront the foe on an open plain amid the roar and booming, the grape and canister from the enemy's hundred or more well conducted guns, and be expected to meet charge after charge from cavalry and infantry from the hour of ten o'clock a.m. until seven or eight p.m.

For instance the battle of Waterloo is amply sufficient to

illustrate my purpose. At the last mentioned hour after such an engagement in respect to time, on such a plan, midst such cannonading, and charging of cavalry by well drilled officers and men (veterans) such as the army of France consisted of at that memorable battle, on one side as our foe, and men constituting the militia of our country on the other; what, sir, would be the result, the story can it be imagined? Would it be the same on our side, as on the side of the British, the evening of that memorable event; even that of the French, or that of the first battle of Bull's Run in the American civil war? Nay, far be it, worse—the army such as it was, absolutely annihilated, loss of cause, ruin and devastation on every hand, the country in the hands, and at the mercy, of the enemy, thousands and thousands of her brave defenders lying dead upon the lost field, the country in mourning, and mothers, sisters, and wives weeping, and crying where is my home, my son, brother, husband, and all, our country tonight! All caused by what? By giving authority to these unqualified persons, as I have herein repeatedly said, to wear the uniform of an officer and lead a company, battalion or brigade, as the case may be, of soldiers, to this fatal field where they would be made naught but desirable targets for the enemy and all shot down as so many pigeons before the fowler's gun.

What better result can be looked for so long as matters remain as they are? What do these men in uniform with authority granted them, and who so forcibly recall to my memory the story of the jackdaw in the peacock's plumage that I am compelled to give them that appellation, understand about warfare, leading troops and conducting the same upon such a field as I have above mentioned, when they, verdant as new cheese, knowing absolutely no more than the recent recruit, are incapable of instructing what is known as the awkward squad? Absolutely nothing is the answer. I must here refer the reader, and you, sir, to the sad blunder made at the battle, or more properly speaking, the skirmish of Ridgeway in 1866, June 1st.

We very frequently hear it said, and it is a settled fact, that people require practice to become perfect; but, sir, when they are wanting in both practice and theory, the story of an engagement conducted by such would indeed be a story of sadness on our side, and, to use a vulgar expression, a walk over on the other, or as Cæsar said, "Veni, Vidi, Vici."

Now having given a fair number of the evil results, consequences, etc., arising from the practice of admitting and maintaining, in the Militia, both active and reserved, men as officers unqualified and, as I have before said and maintain, unfit, I will leave to the reader the task of imagining the thousand and one of the evil results I have left unpeened, and proceed to enquire of the cause of this state of affairs, which, sir, can, I am quite confident, from observation and being nowise unacquainted with the same, be, so to speak, put in a nut shell.

1st. A flaw, or rather loop-hole, in the rules, law or orders for promotions and appointments of officers in the Militia, through which this noxious venom, to which I have herein alluded, clothed in political and social influence, jumps.

2nd. Ignorance and the non-enforcement of the rules which are provided in respect to qualification of officers.

3rd. The exceptions to which all rules are subject; but which are very rarely met with here, and most positively do not include the rare cases, met with, of promotions or appointments by reason of qualification or merit.

When the wise provision abolishing the purchase of commissions in the army by those who possessed more money than military qualification, was enacted with a view to exclude these unqualified persons, unfortunately it appears that no provision was made therein against the giving away of the same by those in authority, to recommend