

THE ASCENSION.

(FROM THE SPANISH OF LOUIS PONCE DE LEON.)

Good Shepherd, wilt thou leave
In this low vale the flock that was thy care
Alone to pine and grieve,
While through the favor air
Thou risest up to folds forever fair?

They who, supremely blest,
Until the dawn of this unhappy day
Leaned on thy loving breast,
To whom on earth shall they
Harken or look when thou art far away?

What comeliness or grace
They whose eyes behold thy beauty see
In other form or face?
What music will not be
Harsh to the ears that harkened once to thee?

Who now upon the deep
Shall look, and curb its fury? Who shall lay
The stormy winds asleep?
What lode-star's friendly ray,
When thine is hid, shall guide the vessel's way?

Why change our happy state,
O envious cloud, to helplessness and fear?
How proud of their rich freight
Thy shining folds appear!
How blind and wretched thou dost leave us here!

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Prize Essays.

DEAR SIR,—Without entering upon the merits of the prize essay on recruiting, already discussed by yourself and portions of the press, I would enquire if the terms of competition have not been somewhat violated in divers ways. In the first place, I do not recollect the motto adopted by Captain Hime to have been published among the many others in your issue, dated last December, but I cannot be certain.

Secondly, The essay extends over forty pages instead of thirty-two only—the number limited.

And thirdly, the preface cannot fail to give rise to impressions somewhat as follows. viz.—The essay has been compiled under the notice of the Royal United Service Institution; that the materials were collected with the assistance of the librarian of that institution; that the views in reference to desertion are the suggestions of Sergeant Henry Cousins, H. Battery 14th Brigade, R., to whom the author must have applied for information; and that, finally, the get-together and connectedness of the essay is due to Professor Cairnes.

The authorship of this work must, it is presumed, have been tolerably well known before the sealed envelope was opened, especially as the suggestive fact becomes apparent that Captain Hime was already an institution gold medalist of 1871.

The author of one of these essays has informed me that his application for a return of his writing and sealed envelope was never sent to.—I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

13th April, 1875. ENQUERER.

SIR,—It has always hitherto been believed, horse racing and other trials of prowess, that the aspirant, in order to carry off the prize, should not only be first to attain the goal, but should also have kept within the marks laid down to indicate the course; and it would appear that the first gold medal of the Royal United Service Institution is attainable irrespective of these time-honoured conditions. The medal was offered for an "Essay upon the best method of training recruits for the British Army."—I am to the ordinary understanding this would imply restriction to the present state of the realm, which only provide for training recruits by voluntary enlistment. It is not my desire, nor is it within my

power, from the meagre report I have seen of the recent meeting, to criticise in detail the scheme of the successful essayist, or to inquire whether the desired result is to be attained by conscription, or if that itself is a possible or desirable method, by which the strength of the Army is to be maintained; but it is my wish to point out that both the unsuccessful competitors, and the public in general, will view with surprise the award of the referees to a proposal which, in reply to a demand for recruits, offers an army the greater portion of which is to be composed of conscripts. In an analogous case there can be little doubt what the verdict of the Jockey Club would have been—it would have pronounced the ostensible winner, whatever his other merits, disqualified.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant.

April 12, 1875.

SECONDUR.

PRIZE ESSAYS AND THE ARMY RESERVES.

SIR,—In Captain Hime's prize essay I find the following deprecatory remarks about the Militia and Volunteers:—"I never hear of the Militia without thinking of Dryden's description of the trained bands of his times—'In peace a charge, in war a weak defence.' Officered, instructed, and disciplined as it is, the Militia is not a reliable force now; and it can never become so, for the simple reason that it is raised, like the army, on the voluntary system." "But we have 180,000 citizen soldiers it may be urged. I know something of the Volunteers, and my conviction is, that the only end gained by supporting them is the gratification of national vanity. Not long ago an Austrian officer irreverently described them as 'a harmless joke.'"

I am but one of many who are anxious to protest against the disparagement thus cast upon our auxiliaries, by others who should be better informed. If the Militia and Volunteers are not perfect, it is the fault of those who study not to make them so, but as their physique and morale is superior to that of the Line, they need only to be fairly instructed to make them good soldiers. Captain Hime would do away with both services; why, forsooth? because, I suppose, they do not fire quite in a direct line, and in matters of discipline are not perfect; but, in regard to drill, who does fire straight? and how can Militiamen become properly disciplined if they are liable to be drafted in shoals to the Line? we deprive the Militia of their best officers and men, and afterwards expect them to be perfect; as for Captain Hime's one year conscripts, heaven save us from such individuals! Tell it not in Kaffirland, or in New Zealand; the savages of both places would endeavour to invade England, if only with the prospect of a good meal off our youthful heroes. I would sooner trust to Militia men and Volunteers, who, fairly instructed and brigaded within our district centres, might become reliable troops, which is more than can be expected of Captain Hime's conscripts, even, be it noted, if they should undergo "drill without end under chosen officers and non-commissioned officers." Why, Sir, under such conditions our present auxiliary forces would be equal to any in Europe.—I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,

April 13, 1874.

[Captain Hime's remarks chime in no doubt with the narrow prejudices of many, but they display a mind little capable of grasping the whole subject of England's defence. Sir Lintorn Simmons will be pleased, and that perhaps was the object aimed at.—Ed. Broad Arrow.]

The Recruiting Question at the Royal United Service Institution.

At the meeting of the Royal United Service Institution of Friday week last, General Sir William Codrington presided over an unusually full gathering to hear Captain Hime offer a few remarks on his essay entitled, "Universal Conscription; the only answer to the Recruiting Question," for which the author has received the gold medal of the Institution. Captain Hime's remarks were chiefly confined to answering some of his critics, who had attributed to him a fondness for the system he had advocated, which he wished to disclaim. He had advocated that system, not because he had any liking for it, but because he believed it to be the only one wherein could be found the remedy for our evils.—Lieutenant-General Sir Lintorn Simmons was opposed to the system of conscription on the grounds that it was not fitted for this country, that it would be impossible to preserve the discipline of an army formed on that basis, and that conscription and the voluntary system could never be carried on together. Voluntary enlistment, the speaker considered, was what was wanted, but voluntary enlistment, fairly tried, as it was now tried, with better conditions held out to encourage men to enter the ranks.—Mr. Holmes, M. P., did not believe that the time had yet arrived for the remedy suggested by Captain Hime, though in many points he was disposed to agree with him. The question was chiefly a question of money—of giving the man who worked for us proper value for their work; but it was not only a question of money, for the working classes would not enter the army save with men of good character. He proposed, also, a reserve of special forces for foreign service in time of peace, and that at the period of enlistment the choice of such service or service at home should be given to each man.—Lord Waveney and Colonel Thesiger also took exception to some of Captain Hime's statements, Colonel Thesiger denying that the army was composed of the residuum of society. The proper working out of the brigade depot system was the remedy he was inclined to advocate, and also that the whole duty of recruiting should be thrown on the Militia, in which force he would have all the officers, and, if possible, non-commissioned officers, from the Regular Army. He agreed with Captain Hime that long service was better than short, as in the case of the latter men were apt to consider the army not so much a profession as a temporary occupation.—Major General Sir Edward Warde was in favour of voluntary enlistment, long service with pensions, and some still stronger inducements to men to join.

The discussion was continued on Monday, when Sir Edward Warde, who had obtained permission to add to his former remarks, said that as so many names had already been sent in of those wishing to speak, he would confine his remarks to the subjects of the Volunteers and the Militia. He did not agree with those who thought the Militia "in peace a charge, in war a weak defence," and of the Volunteers he considered they ought to be spoken of in no other terms than those of high respect. He spoke especially of the artillery, with whom he was well acquainted, and whom he should not hesitate to entrust with defence. He thought, however, that they ought to be under military officers, and should also have gunners of the Royal Artillery with their batteries.—Lieutenant Colonel Pon-