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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, TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 1870.

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 at 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. No communication, however, will be inserted unless the writer's name is given, not necessarily for publication, but that we may be able to refer to it.

We have for the past nine years endeavored to furnish the Volunteer Force of Canada with a paper worthy of their support, but, we regret to say, have not met with that tangible encouragement which we confidently expected when we undertook the publication of a paper wholly devoted to their interests. We now appeal to their civility and ask each of our subscribers to procure another, or to a person sending us the names of four or five new subscribers and the money will be entitled to receive one copy for the year *free*. A little exertion on the part of our friends would materially assist us, besides extending the usefulness of the paper among the forces—keeping them thoroughly posted in all the changes and improvements in the art of war so essential for a military man to know. Our ambition is to improve the *Volunteer Review* in every respect, so as to make it second to none. Will our friends help us to do it? Premiums will be given to those getting up the largest lists. The *Review* being the only military paper published in Canada, it ought to be liberally supported by the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of each Battalion.

The following interesting lecture from a distinguished foreign General will be read with much interest by our Military friends. We are aware of the value of a small and highly disciplined army for purposes of conquest or aggression—but military men seem to forget that there is in war two principles which in a great measure determine all its operations—these are—aggression and defence. The forces requisite and proper for

the former will not suit the latter, and human experience goes to prove that the best way to avoid the results sure to follow from the employment of "small thoroughly equipped armies," is to train every man capable of carrying arms to such knowledge of their use as would make conquest a hopeless and unprofitable operation.

We quite agree with General Brialmont in the idea that no officer can command the masses of men employed in recent warfare. We should fix without hesitation 100,000 men as the limit of command of a general of the greatest military genius, and then it would be a question as to whether even that amount could or would be profitably employed.

In the present transition state, it is only one horde overrunning the possessions of another not quite as well prepared; and it is hopeless to seek for change till the pressure of taxation will compel disarmament.

"Enormous armaments constitute one of the chief evils of the age. General Brialmont, in a lecture he recently delivered at the Royal Academy of Belgium, gave some statistics on this head which are truly appalling. The General said that in ancient times there may be said to have been no class of men who devoted their lives exclusively to war. Battles were fought by the whole adult population of a nation, and when the necessity was over all returned to the labours and industries of peace. Before the time of Philip of Macedon the only permanent troops in any country were a few palace guards. That ruler may be said to have introduced the custom of standing mercenary armies. The Roman legions for a long time were little better than militia. Marius introduced the permanent system from the aversion of the higher and wealthier classes to serve. Then came the Empire, with mercenaries, and these always deteriorating in quality while increased in quantity. The largest armies of the Roman Republic, according to this authority, never exceeded 83,000 men. At the close of the reign of Augustus, 197,000 were permanently under arms. By the time of Constantine the number had risen to 450,000. After the upbreak of the Roman Empire, military service under the feudal system was regarded as a natural charge upon landed property. In fact, that kind of property was understood to meet all the expenses of defending and governing a country. By degrees mercenaries were again introduced. The number was increased, but again the quality of the soldiers degenerated. The feudal system may be said to have come to an end about 1445, after which again ensued an era of mercenary and permanent armies. Francis I. fought the Battle of Pavia with only 30,000. It was then the custom, at the end of every war, to disband a great many of the troops, and lessen the strength of the other corps. Under Louis XII. the French army reached 100,000, but the most arbitrary measures had to be taken in order to keep it up to that figure. Louis XIV., raised it to 396,000, but at an enormous sacrifice. After the peace of Ryswick, Vauban declared that one-tenth of the inhabitants of France were paupers, five-tenths little better off, other three-tenths were poor, and of the remaining 100,000 families only 10,000 were prosperous. All this told adversely, according to General Brialmont, against the art of war. The armies became mobs, and the skill of the generals also deteriorated.

Napoleon's most brilliant campaigns were made with comparatively small armies. In 1812 he had at his disposal 1,135,000 soldiers, but his achievements were not in correspondence with these numbers, nor was the personnel of his armies what it had been. Since that time the size of European standing armies has enormously increased. In 1818 France had only 118,000 under arms. By 1832 her peace strength had risen to 452,000, and in 1870 the number had grown on paper to 909,000. Germany, in 1850, had an army on a war footing of 530,000; now it is thought that 2,800,000 could be placed under arms. This is one in every fourteen of the population. In the seven years' war Russia, Prussia, France, and Italy had under arms 1,150,000. In 1827 the same territorial map could have produced 2,629,000, and today 7,170,000. By the new military laws this number will soon become 11,000,000. This is a crushing weight, under which the strongest and wealthiest nations must soon break down. The only remedies, according to General Brialmont, are either universal disarmament by the common consent of all the parties, or the introduction in all cases of personal service without the alternative of substitutes. A small thoroughly equipped army will be found far more efficient now, as in former times, than immense poorly-disciplined masses. Whatever may be thought of this, it is evident that it is a folly beyond all follies for Europe to keep eleven millions or the half of eleven millions of its young men in idleness, as a burden on the industrious portion of the different communities, and that for the purpose of being ready for a contingency that may never arise. At the present rate peace is more expensive and more weakening than war, so that some change, and that speedily, is inevitable. Enormous standing armies, in short, are at once symptoms and causes of national decay, and even it may be said of martial deterioration."

The most vital question affecting the British Empire is that of the practical *Security of the Seas*—everything connected with her naval affairs have been consequently keenly criticised—and we may gather in part the satisfactory assurance that her position is as impregnable now as when Nelson left her without an opponent. From *Broad Arrow* of 22nd April, we copy the following "Recent Criticisms on the Navy."

A great source of satisfaction to those who view with regret either the apathy or errors of the heads of public departments is found in the existence of so many associations of professional men, and the fearless expressions of opinion upon national questions which proceed therefrom at their periodical meetings. An evil cannot exist long without being detected and pointed out; and the criticisms of men eminent in their professions are not slow in reaching the notice of Government officials. Indeed, it frequently happens that the responsible authorities consider it worth their while to attend such meetings, and even join in the discussions. Hence, if public servants are teachable, the country profits by the wisdom of professional men who are not in the employment of the State; and, under any circumstances, the public service must be benefited by the exposure of errors and the denunciation of absurdities. While the United Service Institution and the Institution of Naval Architects enjoy such vigorous existence as at present, there is no danger of foreign supremacy in the *material* of war, nor of the public